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it's a cracker

+
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[exclusive interview]

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GROUP EFFORT

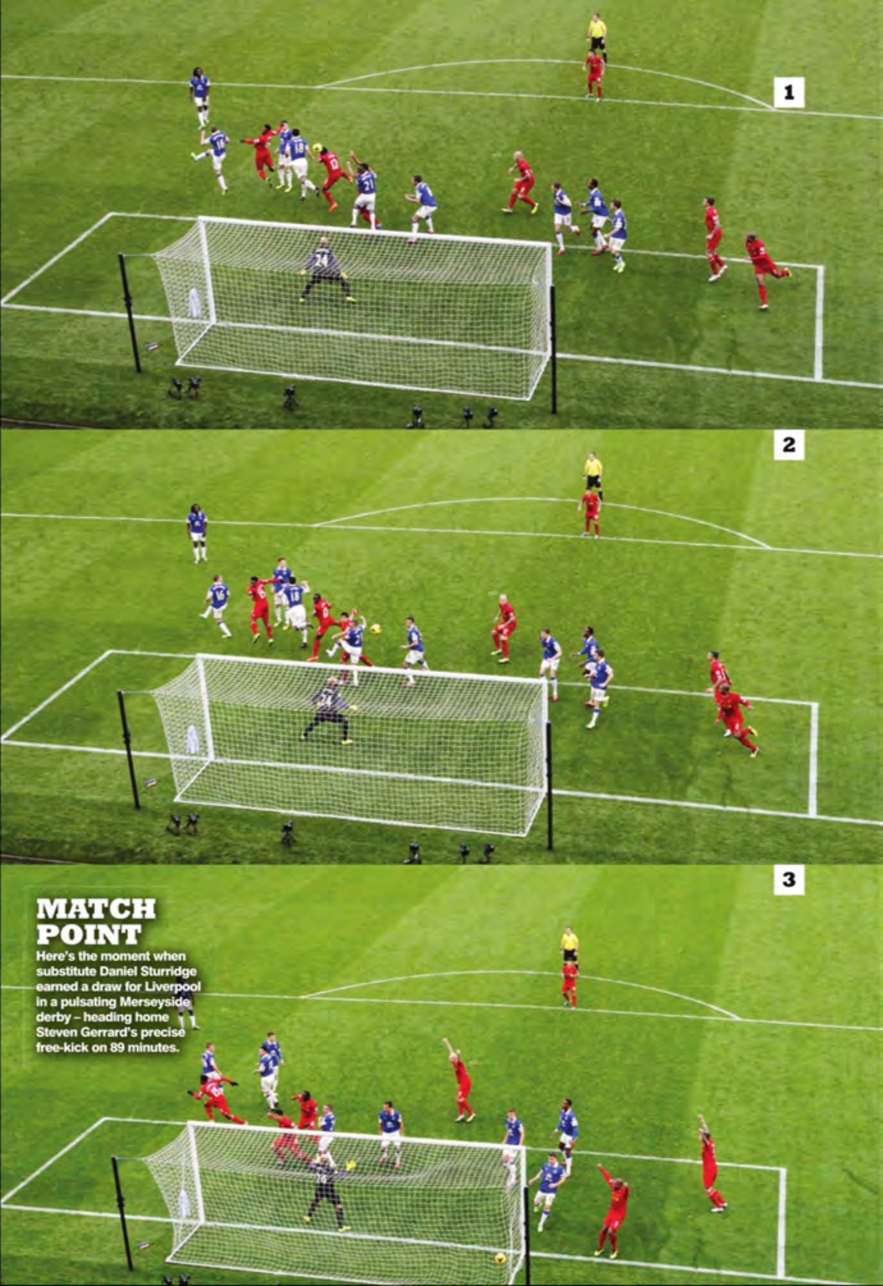
With 36 minutes on the clock the Reds celebrate going 3-0 up against Fulham last month. Fernando Amorebieta's own-goal and a Martin Skrtel header were followed by the first of two superb finishes from Luis Suarez – in this case the culmination of a sweet move involving Steven Gerrard and Jordan Henderson.


JOHNSON
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MIKE'S HOME

Hollywood actor Mike Myers was at Anfield to see the 4-0 win over Fulham. He was born in Canada to parents from the Old Swan area of the city and says: "I feel very connected to the people of Liverpool – I just get off the plane from London and I get a grin on my face. It's just great to be here. It's always emotional."



MATCH POINT

Here's the moment when substitute Daniel Sturridge earned a draw for Liverpool in a pulsating Merseyside derby – heading home Steven Gerrard's precise free-kick on 89 minutes.



JUMPING FOR JOY

That's Steven Gerrard and Lucas after team-mate Philippe Coutinho scores the first goal of the game in the Goodison derby with an opportunist effort from the skipper's corner on five minutes.

"BEING MANAGER OF LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB IS A PRIVILEGE NOT A PRESSURE"

Manager Brendan Rodgers talks candidly about his club's progress and prospects halfway through the 2013/14 campaign. *William Hughes* takes notes

You've spoken a lot about controlling games – how important is it to dominate possession?

You don't always have to have dominated possession or have had better control of the ball to win a game, but it's a key part of how I work and I think that's really the measure of most of the best teams in the world. Most of the better teams are normally the ones who are superior on the ball than their opponent. When you align that with defensive qualities, that's a hard combination to beat. It's not necessarily the right way or the wrong way but it's the philosophy behind the way I've always worked.

The style and the spectacle are important too?

I mentioned at a recent press conference that soon after I had gone in as manager of Watford [in 2008] we beat Swansea 2-0. Swansea were on a great run at the time and it got voted as the performance of the week, but I wasn't happy. When I look at control, I look at both elements – with and without the ball. In that particular game we controlled the game well but it was without the ball. It was more set-up to play on the counter-attack. I hadn't been at Watford long and Swansea had a model that had been up-and-running for a few years but I've always looked at performance as well as result. That is the beauty of football for me. I couldn't be a coach and win ugly every week. That's not how I work on a day-to-day basis. When you're looking to improve the performance of individuals, I see that in the context of the team. Of course you always want to play well and win but the idea is to play offensive, attacking football that can bring positive results. That's what we work towards every day in training.

Jurgen Klopp recently said: 'Borussia Dortmund don't just play for a result – Borussia Dortmund are an experience'. Do you feel the same way about your Liverpool team?

Yes and I think that's the philosophy here at Liverpool. This is a club that's steeped in the tradition of good football. It's not just about winning, it's about winning in a certain way. That was the big appeal for me in coming here, knowing that the supporters are educated supporters. They know that, okay, you might be winning games but if it's not getting them off their seat… I like exciting football and players that can really get you off your seat. Of course I also admire brilliant defending and good organisation but the core of it is seeing an exciting team working hard.

How close do you think the team is now with regards to that overall ideal?

I think gradually over time we're getting closer and closer. There have been games where that hasn't been the case, but you have to be realistic and accept that you're not going to dominate and control every single match. But there have certainly been moments that have been approaching where we want to be. If you look at the game against Fulham last month, we had nearly 70% of the ball and had 32 opportunities at goal, so that was very good. West Bromwich Albion at home was another really good performance. And it shouldn't be forgotten that





these type of matches are not easy games. West Bromwich Albion should have beaten Chelsea away, they did beat Manchester United away and they've drawn with Arsenal at home. Afterwards people weren't talking so much about how good we were but perhaps that West Brom weren't so good on the day. But we have made games like those look easier than they probably are and that's a great credit to the players. We're moving towards the philosophy we want but we've still got constant improvements to make, even in victory.

How important in your match preparation is the work of the opposition analysis department?

Chris Davies [head of opposition analysis] and his team do excellent work for us. You usually have a good idea of how an opponent will play through their history and sometimes the history of their coach, but you're always looking for the finer details. Chris and his team will prepare extensive analysis of the opponents tailored to the things we look at. We focus on various moments of a game and look at their offensive and defensive organisation and offensive and defensive transitions. We're very thorough in how we look at that and then see how that can help us prepare to exploit opportunities in the game. I will also watch the opponent on my iPad to see if there's anything else I can pick up on, and so we enter into the games fully prepared.

In terms of using the data in our training programmes, we correlate information with the medical and sports science departments to analyse and assess the players physically, and of course we'll look at tactical and technical elements too. The analysis department has been very good at creating individual DVDs for players to provide motivation and reinforce their qualities. They can also provide specific DVDs on our opponents. There's a great deal of work that goes into helping us be the very best that we can be.

"The idea is to give our fans exciting football that gets them off their seats"

You want players to have courage on the ball, and the last few home games have seen some exhilarating one-touch moves in tight areas in the final third of the pitch...

Absolutely but that's the easy part of the pitch in terms of being brave because in those areas you can try things in terms of your invention and your fantasy. For me, bravery is a player willing to go and receive the ball off the goalkeeper or centre-halves 20 yards from his own goal. It's brave to go and get the ball there to start your attacks rather than making it a percentage game by kicking it long upfield all the time. The bravery in the players and the courage they've shown is very good and with our work they'll hopefully continue to improve.


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How much can a player develop in training?

I would like to think that if a player has the right mentality, he can always learn. That's from the youngest players to the senior players. I've seen development in Steven Gerrard – you can look at his pass-completion rate now and his ability to dictate the game. You still see his quality. He played for 65 minutes against Fulham and was exceptional. He still has the qualities to dictate a game but I can see his maturity all the time and that comes from his experience and his ability to learn what we're trying to do. I see improvements in other players too. I look at Martin Skrtel and I see someone who has proved me right. He hasn't proved me wrong – I think he's proved me right. Last year I felt he was rash and made mistakes. Now he's arguably one of the best centre-halves in the Premier League. He's composed, he looks bigger on the pitch and he's been brilliant during this run he's had in the team so hopefully that will continue. He's another international captain who's still improving. Jordan Henderson is somebody else who I think has made progress. So I see improvement in the players, but that's down to them. As coaches and managers we are tools to make them better – the key is whether they want to learn and thankfully I have a tremendous group of players who have a real hunger to succeed and hopefully they feel they're getting better.

There has been a lot of debate this season about the fact that only 30% of Premier League starting line-ups are made up of English players - where do you stand on the issue?

I think it's important to have a core of players from the country you're working in. If I worked in Italy I would want an Italian core, or in Spain a Spanish core. Here, it needs to be a British core. But when you're one of the leading clubs in the world you're always monitoring what's out there in world football. We would hopefully be able to attract some top European and international players. I've always been open-minded and have enjoyed working with players from Britain, Europe and further afield because I enjoy the fusion between the British mentality and the qualities brought in from other nations. But again, depending on the culture of where you are working, that's where the core of the team has to be from. And so for me the heart and soul of what we do has to be British.





"We're moving towards the philosophy we want but we've got constant improvements to make"

How do you use international breaks?

It's a mixture of working with young players at Melwood, planning ahead and trying to watch games. During the most recent break we had all the youth-team players joining in with the small group of senior players who weren't away with their countries – Luis Alberto, Philippe Coutinho, Aly Cissokho and Brad Jones. It was a good opportunity to see the kids and because I do a lot of the coaching, a chance for the other staff to coach and work with the players. We enjoy good communication between the Academy and the first team and it was a chance to work and talk with Alex Inglethorpe, Neil Critchley and the other coaches. Our youth team had just returned from Seville where the young players had a chance to add to their experiences. It's very much a one-club mentality and that's something that's important to me.

We also spent some time reflecting and preparing for the next opponents, analysing them and assessing our game and what we can improve in order to get results. The November international break isn't ideal but as a club manager you have to accept it and use the time wisely.

You have said it will take a few transfer windows to get the squad you want. How happy are you with the current group?

In every window you want to reinforce the team. I think the recent history of the windows show that we have moved on and progressed each time. In January this year we improved the team with Coutinho and Sturridge. Then in the summer we improved it again by bringing in Simon Mignolet, who has been excellent along with other players, some for now and some for the future. We are keen to bring in young players as it is important to look after the club's future. If we can be in a position to strengthen again this January that will be great, but we'll have to wait and see.

You seem to handle the pressure of the role well - is the club's past a help or a hindrance?

Pressure for me is the family where the mum and dad aren't working – it's coming up to Christmas, they want to buy presents for their children and they haven't the money. Being manager of Liverpool Football Club is a privilege not a pressure. The pressure is only that which I put on myself to win and to be the best that I can be. The club's history and tradition was the reason I came here and you can never rest when you're one of the

leading sporting institutions in the world. You don't have the time to have a breather! You have to be the best you can be and the history of the club dictates that. But that's my character and what I want to be. I had a great chat with Kenny Dalglish recently where we were talking about the current and the past. I really embrace that because it's a great motivation for us but it shouldn't hold us back. It will only do so if you're weak in your mind. We have to be a modern club while always respecting the history and retaining the strong values installed by Shankly, Paisley, Kenny and all the greats. But we have to have a sense of the present and the future as well.



Do you and your staff break the season into sections when it comes to reviewing progress or is it an ongoing process?

We break it into chunks as I think it's difficult to review it regularly over the course of 38 games. We wanted to make a good start and after 10 games I think we could say that it was a good start. That was a good barometer. Then we will look at the five games from Fulham to West Ham. Then, very quickly, there are four games from Tottenham away to Chelsea away, which takes us to the end of the year and the 19-game mark. By the halfway point we'll have played everyone else and have a greater measure of where we're at. I think it's important to look at your goals that way and strategically try to map things out. It's very difficult to forecast because you never know what the opposing team will bring. What you can do is try and prepare so that you bring your 'A game' to each fixture. And if we can bring our 'A game' into the majority of our fixtures, we will win them.

Are you pleased with the progress made by the first team throughout 2013?

So far! I think if you trace it all the way back, there was a difficult period when I first came in as manager with the transitional phase at the beginning. You learn very quickly at the big clubs that there's no breathing space because you've got to win games. But perseverance is one of the biggest attributes you can have and we persevered and since January our form has been really good. I would imagine it would see us comfortably up there in the top four in terms of the calendar year. But the measure of the good teams is that you've got to sustain it. We've sustained it for a period and started this season very well. What we have in the team now is a resilience. In my time here we've never lost two league games on the spin and that's a factor in the consistency and winning mentality that we're trying to build. Whenever you fall, you need to get up as quickly as you can and go again. The way we've done that is something that has pleased me. I'm pleased with the progress because we've sat second in the league but while there's space up above us we'll continue to fight.


New pitch at Rainhill

Being Brendan Rodgers

As the boss says, there's no time for a breather when you're in charge at LFC. Just recently, among many other official engagements, Brendan Rodgers unveiled a plaque to mark the opening of the new interactive Liverpool FC Story museum at Anfield (right). A few days later he was at Rainhill High School for the opening of a new third-generation or 3G pitch (left) that will benefit the local community as well as students. With him were past and present Rainhill students Jordan Ibe, Jordan Rossiter and Lloyd Jones – the school provides GCSE education to the club's Under 12s to U16s, BTEC qualifications to the U18s and life-skills education to the U21s. The pitch has been funded with a grant of £300,000 from the Premier League Community Facilities Fund.


New museum at Anfield



Why not have a winter break after the festive fixture period?

Didi HAMANN





Anfield Santas

During my time with Bayern Munich I spent almost every Christmas skiing in Austria with my family. I wouldn't return to training until around 6 or 7 January, then the season would resume a week or two later. It doesn't sound like a long break but it definitely felt that way. All of the squad would come back in a good mood, relaxed and refreshed. You could clearly see the benefits of the time off.

During that same period this season Liverpool will travel to Man City and Chelsea – two of the best teams in the league – before hosting Hull City and then starting their FA Cup campaign.

I know that years ago in England there was a league game on Christmas Day and the return fixture 24 hours later. That eventually became impractical – and I feel having no winter break is now going the same way.

Tradition in this country means there is always loads of football around the festive period and supporters really look forward to it. I have no problem with that. In fact I used to really enjoy it because the atmosphere at a Boxing Day or New Year's Day match was nearly always superb.

As someone who always preferred playing to training it suited me to have so many fixtures – there simply was no time for practice sessions. We'd warm down after one game and move on to the next. It was a quick turnaround.

"A break from mid to late January would benefit everyone"

If it was up to me I'd keep that traditional element of the fixture calendar. I'd have games on 26 December and then on 1 or 2 January before halting the season until mid-January. That would allow players time off to put their feet up or maybe go away for a few days. Everyone would benefit – the clubs and the national side. I don't think a winter break is the only reason why Germany regularly does well in major tournaments but it's definitely a big factor.

While players in the Bundesliga or La Liga are recuperating, those in this country are right in the middle of a vital period. With so many points available in a short space of time you can really set yourself up for a strong title or top-four challenge.

The problem is that playing without a pause – and in such a physically demanding environment – eventually catches up with you. Although I knew the situation when I arrived in England, having no winter break still took some getting used to. For the first and second year it wasn't actually too bad. But after that – especially in seasons that concluded with a World Cup or Euros – I did notice the impact.

It will be the same for any Premier League player who goes far with their country in Brazil next summer. The tournament ends in July and some lads will have started pre-season nearly 12 months earlier. That is far too demanding on the body of any athlete.

Follow Didi on Twitter @dietmarhamann



Together we are limitless

That was the motto of the Liverpool Ladies team under Matt Beard, the FA WSL manager of the year, who tells William Hughes the hard work has only just begun

Having had time to reflect on it, as manager of Liverpool Ladies FC how pleasing was 2013?

It was a fantastic season. The players deserve enormous credit because they are the ones who have performed week in and week out and implemented our game plan. Even when we did get beaten, they have shown enormous amounts of character in the way they have responded. My staff also deserve great credit for the work that they've put in. Now that the season is over and we've sat down and reflected on it, it was a big achievement. For me the major benefit was having the opportunity to work with the players every day. That meant we were fitter, stronger and more organised, and really that just came down to contact time with players.

People have spoken about how quickly the team bonded as a group - was that also a key factor?

Yes, definitely. We've done a lot of classroom-based sessions where we



'TWAL': the message on the back of this fan's shirt is loud and clear



would sit down with the group. They came up with their own team ethos which was the focal point at the end of the year and became a motto: *Together We Are Limitless*. We've done other bits and bobs around that with regards momentum and strategies. Away from the football environment the players bonded and they used to go for coffees and dinners together and so on. That does help because it's like anything else – you do a lot for your friends.

I've been working with the development squad [younger prospects] recently and I told them that, including five friendlies, it took us 14 games to get our game plan right. We're going through that same process now with the development squad and it's important right the way across the board – from the first-team squad to the development team to the Centre of Excellence – that the players have the same ethos and work as hard as they can.

Being champions will bring different challenges...

It's going to be a different pressure for the players and myself to deal with but I'm confident we will do that. We've got a lot of experience in the team with players like Corina Schroder, who's 26, Tats [Dowie] is 25 and Fara [Williams] is 29 and that will help us. I'm confident within the group and we're also looking to strengthen the team and add more competition and better quality which will make sure the players are kept on their toes. And if they're not performing it will give us the ability to change it. It's a challenge that we're looking forward to. We've got Europe to concentrate on as well next year, so there are lots of other added factors coming into the new season.

Is it a help or a hindrance that the Champions League comes in the autumn once the FA WSL season is over?

I think it gives everyone something to look forward to as the season progresses which is important because it is a long season. The only reason we start back for pre-season in January is because England have the players for almost four weeks during the build-up. The Champions League is exciting for us to be a part of and with it



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being at the end of our season, it also allows us to fully concentrate on the domestic campaign first.

Last winter you made a dozen signings - is it more a case of a few tweaks this time around?

Yes, I think so. We're in the process of tying players down from the current Liverpool Ladies squad while we look to strengthen. There are some good players available and we've got players in mind but they've got to be of the right character as well which is really important because we don't want anyone to come in and disrupt the togetherness that the group has got. By mid-December we should have everything confirmed and it's always better if the whole group will be there when we come in for pre-season. If you're adding new signings at the last minute, it means you've got a lot of work to do with those players.

This time last year it was a hard sell because we'd finished bottom of the league two years on the spin. But a lot of the players bought into what we were trying to do and where we were trying to go. This year we are asking players to join the champions and we have an advantage in that we are in Europe whereas Manchester City aren't and neither are Notts County or Arsenal.

One player moving on is Whitney Engen...

Unfortunately, yes. Whitney's a contracted player with the USA national team. She is one of 30 players who has a central contract with the American national team and the US have told us she has to be back in America next year, so it is out of our hands.





Skipper Gemma with the trophy

> "Any new signings have to be the right character for this group"

You selected captain Gemma Bonner as your player of the year and she's now made the breakthrough into the full England team...

I'd worked with Gemma at Chelsea when she was just 18 years old. She's consistent week in week out. She's not one of those who will scream and shout at people but leads by example. I remember we were doing a 'YoYo' test in pre-season, soon after we'd announced she would be the captain. One of the younger players was struggling with the test and Gemma went and ran with her and gave her encouragement and it just showed me that it was the right decision. She's a great character, is still only young and her maturity for her age is fantastic. The captaincy has helped her progress as a player as well because she's obviously got an added responsibility. I'm delighted that England have seen that and rewarded her because in my opinion, she's the best domestic centre-back in our country. She's that good. When we first spoke about the captaincy she wasn't going to take it. She was a little bit worried because there were some senior players in the squad like Whitney, Fara and Tats, but I'd like to think it was the correct decision if you look at how she performed. And she lifted the FA WSL trophy at the end of the year, which was fantastic.



A champagne reception from Ladies midfielder Katrin Omarsdottir

> "We had great publicity last season but we can't stand still"

The FA WSL will continue to get stronger next season...

It will probably be the toughest season domestically for years and years. Lincoln Ladies have moved to Nottingham to become Notts County and are going in as a full-time football club. We've seen ourselves this year that while we've not been full-time we've trained every day because we've had access to the facilities and we've reaped the benefits of that. Manchester City are coming in too and not many teams in the world can compete with their financial resources. Arsenal have always had a strong budget and will take stock of what's happened this year, and Bristol and Chelsea will strengthen again.

That's why it's vital that we continue to progress as a club. We had some very good publicity last year both on and off the pitch in terms of what we were doing but we can't stand still. There are financial rewards if you progress in the Champions League and if we can bring in the players I would like, then we'll be a stronger team than we were last year which will put us in a better position going into 2014.

Was it important for the women's game in this country to break Arsenal's dominance?

I don't know. They got pushed all the way in the first year of the FA WSL too which was exciting for the league because it went down to the last day. They dominated it in the second year because teams couldn't compete when Alex Scott, Katie Chapman and Gemma Davison all came back to Arsenal after spells in America and they ran away with it and rightly so. Vic Akers [Arsenal's general manager] has been talking about the money Man City will bring into the league, but Arsenal have been in that position for the last 10 years. They've always had the biggest budget and the best players. Now other clubs have invested and it's become more competitive which makes it entertaining. Look at the men's Premier League. At the recent international break Arsenal were top and Liverpool second and who would have expected that at the start of the season with the money Man City have spent? It's exciting and it's going to be good going forward because it will be interesting to see how Arsenal react and respond as a club.

How important is it to produce good young players for the first-team squad?

It's massive. When I came in to Liverpool I spent two months with the players I inherited and it was clear within that period that the majority weren't good enough to compete at FA WSL level and that's when the hard work really started with watching lots of games and speaking to players. I've spent the past couple of months getting to know the younger age-groups. On Monday nights I've been helping with training at the Centre of Excellence to get to know the Under 11s, 13s, 15s and 17s and they're excited by us winning the league. Then I've been working with the development squad on a Thursday and going to their games on a Sunday so the break's enabled me to get to know the rest of the set-up which is important.

Can Liverpool Ladies reach the latter stages of the Champions League?

I think so. I do feel that with the players we've got and those we are hopeful of recruiting, we'll have a chance of getting to the latter stages of the tournament. We've got players who have played in it before in Fara and Natasha, and Corina Schroder's won it with Duisburg. Then our international players have played in European Championships and World Cup qualifiers and that experience will be key in our preparation and helping the players who haven't played in the tournament before to understand what's needed. It always helps if the draw is relatively kind too, but I would be confident that we can realistically target the quarter-final stages.



"IT SHOULD BE TOUGH FOR YOUNG PLAYERS TO BREAK INTO THE TEAM"

But Raheem Sterling also realises that it pays to learn from pep talks with Kolo Toure, the passion of Luis Suarez and the hard work of Jordan Henderson. Simon Hughes listens in

Raheem Sterling arrives in muddied football clothing without footwear and a little out of breath. He is slightly late for this interview at Melwood but carries a reasonable explanation, the kind of explanation that you want to hear.

Today is no different to any other. After training there is more work to be done. He shoots with his right foot. He shoots with his left foot. Raheem practises chipping shots, curling shots, hitting them hard.

Sterling is not alone. On this particular morning team-mates Jordan Henderson and Jordon Ibe were there too, standing in the rain, moving in the rain, shooting in the rain. Henderson has said before that he does not see this as a sacrifice at all. It is just part of being a footballer. But then – not every player at every club has the same attitude.

So you're taking on extra shooting practice...

I enjoy it. I'm always out with the other boys [Ibe and Henderson]. I've always scored goals in the youth teams but when you step up [into the first team] there are fewer chances and it's more difficult to get into good goalscoring positions because the opposition is better. You realise that you have to be more clinical: hit the ball really hard and be accurate too. You also really realise that if you score goals as a winger, it puts more pressure on the manager to play you. It's a part of my game I'm determined to get better at.

Jordan does a lot of extra work in training doesn't he?

Jordan [Henderson] is an example to all the Liverpool squad, not just the young players here. He's a really good lad and very down-to-earth. He's worked so, so hard to get to where he is. Obviously the ability is there but if you don't work hard it doesn't mean much. He's worked really hard in every part of his game, he's in the gym every day. He deserves his place. For me, that's the way you want to be. He never stops.


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Jordan previously told us the extra practice gives him more confidence on the pitch…

We've got great players and big personalities upfront in Suarez and Sturridge so you're always going to look to them. You know if you give them enough of the ball, they're likely to cause problems and score goals. As you get older, you get more courage to maybe take the responsibility yourself. It comes with time, the confidence to express yourself. I feel that's coming.

What's it like to share a pitch and a dressing-room with Luis?

He's one of the best players in the world. We're really happy to have him at the club. For a player like me, it's a privilege to watch him every day. I've lost count of the number of nutmegs he does in training before putting the ball in the top corner. You can learn from him but to be honest you can't copy the stuff he does because only he can do it. The biggest thing is his hunger to work hard for the team. Even with all that ability, he never stops.

You are 19 this month and heading towards 50 appearances for Liverpool [at the time of writing]…

I honestly didn't realise that. Since making my debut in the Liverpool first team I haven't set myself targets. At first I looked at my appearances and thought: wow, I'm doing this quite young. But for the last 12 months I've been focused on getting a regular place, so I haven't thought about it too much. Until you've played hundreds of games for the first team and hopefully won a few medals, I suppose it doesn't really matter. Although it's nice to be where I am in terms of appearances, what I really want is to get back into my rhythm like I felt I was at the start of last season and hopefully nail down my place in the side.

The boss on Raheem and Jordon Ibe: "There aren't going to be many 17 or 18-year-olds ready for the first team but we want them to be at 20 or 21."



Since becoming a part of the first team set up 18 months ago, what have you learnt about yourself and about football?

There have been quite a few ups and quite a few downs. I've learnt that every day is a learning curve both on the pitch and off the pitch. You begin to understand quickly that although you're a first-team player, that's when the real hard work starts. When I was younger it was just about playing, scoring goals and enjoying it. There is an added pressure that comes with it now. Coming through the youth team,

Handshakes with Philippe Coutinho

“I want to get back into my rhythm like I felt I was at the start of last season”

you don't really realise this until you're there – what the expectations are in terms of consistency. You have to be on it every single day. You can't afford to relax. Quickly, you have to grow up fast and learn.

Senior pros like Steven Gerrard always say that success is determined by how you deal with setbacks – is this true?

I think that's a good statement. In football every player has good times and bad times. It's how quick you respond to bad times. You assess it and have to move on quickly. All the time I'm thinking what I could do better. Obviously ability is a big part of football and being successful. But you also need to be tough in the mind. I'm lucky that there are a lot of senior pros here I can learn from. The biggest thing I've seen is that everyone is down-to-earth. There are lots of good people. I think the manager has done well to get the right balance. For a young player like me, it's great to have big characters like Kolo [Toure] and [Mamadou] Sakho around the place. Kolo's always talking to me about football – what he thinks I'm good at, where I can improve.

Having played a lot of games last season and not so many this season, how do you deal with that?

If the team is winning without you, you can have no complaints. The team has been winning. We're doing well. Obviously you want to play more. That's why you're a footballer. But the only way you can respond is work hard in training and be consistent. That's the reality of being a Liverpool player. It should be hard for young players to break into the team. All you can do is make sure when an opportunity does come along you take it and make the manager think about you. The Christmas period is coming up and there might be some rotation. I'm hopeful that a chance will arrive.



Coming on as sub for Iago Aspas

Football is about taking opportunities isn't it?

I came in at 17 against Manchester City and I'd like to think I took my chance that day because I've been at Melwood every day since then. City were champions. They had and still have a lot of world-class players. But you can't think about that. It's all about what you do, your attitude. This season I've played some games in positions that I'm not used to. In the last five years I've probably played most games as a left winger. The defensive side of the game definitely needed improving. But this season I've played right-back and right wing-back. I learnt a lot in doing that: where to run, where to hold your position, the positional sense. It doesn't matter where you play. You have to do your best and prove to the manager you're up for the fight. I'm happy to play wherever the manager puts me in the team and take the opportunity.

You are playing regularly with the England Under 21s, however…

I realise I got my debut with the seniors really early. Continuing my development with the Under 21s is really good for me. It's easy to forget I'll still be eligible to play for them for a few years yet. We're doing really well at the moment, moving the ball well. It's a good group of players who all get on well. It's exciting to play with players as good as Ravel [Morrison], James Ward-Prowse. Hopefully we can all move up together.

Right on cue



Raheem paid a visit to a community group in Liverpool recently to drop off a unique Christmas present – a pool table which had been housed at Melwood for several years and signed by Steven Gerrard, Luis Suarez and manager Brendan Rodgers.

Raheem presented the table to young volunteers at the Toxteth Fire Fit Hub that provides young people from across the city with world-class facilities in a safe, stimulating and fun environment.

Afterwards he enjoyed a quick game of pool and watched a game of five-a-side on the centre's outdoor pitches. The Hub is one of the Liverpool FC Foundation's recognised youth centres, and the table is a genuine piece of sporting memorabilia with a certificate of authenticity from the club.



Celebrating a goal against Notts County

There was so much expectation when you arrived in the Liverpool first team. Is it difficult to be the same person you've always been?

I was always the same kid. I've never read much of what is said by other people, just the ones that matter. When I was at the Liverpool FC Academy I'd play my game and afterwards I'd hear some positive comments from the commentators and that was nice. But I never really thought too much about it. I don't think it went to my head. Even when I made my first-team debut for Liverpool, it didn't really change. I listened to my mum and I listened to the manager. They are the people that count.

What's the best thing about being a young professional footballer?

Waking up every day knowing you'll be out on the pitch; knowing you're going in to play the sport that you've wanted to do for as long as you remember. When I was younger it was everything I wanted to do. It's a dream come true.

And the most difficult?

I suppose it has to be when you're not playing. That's the worst time. Every footballer wants to contribute towards a winning team like the one we have here at Anfield at the moment. If you don't, then it feels like you're missing out.

It's a kind of magic

Here's Raheem with Jordon Ibe being dazzled by the tricks of Liverpool-supporting magician Zamaan Ismail at Melwood recently – all filmed for two new episodes of Kop Kids to be aired on LFC TV in December. As well as being able to access the channel via LFC TV Online, LFC TV is also free to view on Sky channel 429 or Virgin channel 544. For full listings please visit www.liverpoolfc.com.






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100

Pride of Belgium shattered in European Cup first tilt

LIVERPOOL — RED SHIRTED CRUSADERS OF ENGLAND

Hunt, Yeats and St John score golden goals

By HORACE YATES









A boost to our morale

WE BEAT THEM ON TACTICS, SAYS SHANKLY

Scotland lost goal urge

Graham in Under-23 team

70

ANDERLECHT (H) WON 3-0

European Cup first round first leg 25 November 1964

On the night when Liverpool first sported an all-red kit they also overcame their first formidable obstacle in Europe thanks to a double-stroke of tactics and psychology from the boss. Most of the Anderlecht side had represented Belgium in a recent international against England and Bill Shankly was impressed with what he'd seen that night – but he told his players they'd be facing a team of no-hopers. Liverpool ran out in a new strip that Shanks reckoned made them look 'seven foot tall' and that wasn't the only surprise. Despite wearing the no10 shirt a young Tommy Smith was deployed alongside Ron Yeats in the centre of defence. The visitors had expected him to line-up as an inside-forward and the Reds took advantage to build up a first-leg lead with goals from St John, Hunt and Yeats, after which Shankly told his players: 'Congratulations – you've just beaten one of the best teams in Europe'.

PART FOUR: 70 TO 61 By Mark Platt

GREATEST GAMES

69 QPR (H) WON 4-0

First Division 17 October 1987

This was the game that saw Kenny's class of 87/88 hit top spot in the First Division for the first time – doing so in exhilarating style. Full-house signs were commonplace and for the visit of morning league leaders Queens Park Rangers the Kop gates were locked an hour-and-a-half before kick-off. Those lucky enough to get in were treated to John Barnes, the star attraction in the team's new attacking triumvirate, netting two sublime individual goals. Craig Johnston had earlier broken the deadlock and John Aldridge, scoring in a record-breaking 10th consecutive league game, added a second. Barnes then took centre stage. His first came following an exchange on the edge of the box with Aldridge and he completed the scoring by winning the ball on the halfway line and slaloming past two defenders before side-footing into the bottom corner.

DIVISION 1

Season 1987-88

(Up to and including Saturday, 10th October, 1987)

	P.	W.	D.	L.	Goals F.	Goals A.	Pts
Q.P.R.	10	8	1	1	16	5	25
LIVERPOOL	8	7	1	0	24	6	22
Arsenal	10	6	2	2	18	5	20
Manchester Utd.	11	5	5	1	19	11	20
Nottingham Forest	10	6	2	2	16	9	20
Tottenham H.	11	6	2	3	15	8	20
Chelsea	11	6	1	4	21	17	19
Everton	11	5	3	3	18	8	18
Coventry City	9	5	1	3	11	12	16
Oxford	10	4	2	4	14	16	14
Portsmouth	11	3	4	4	12	23	13
Wimbledon	10	3	3	4	12	13	12
Derby Co.	10	2	4	4	7	12	10
Norwich	11	3	1	7	8	15	10
Newcastle Utd.	9	2	3	4	11	16	9
Luton Town	11	2	3	6	12	18	9
West Ham Utd.	10	1	5	4	9	13	8
Watford	9	2	2	5	5	11	8
Southampton	9	1	4	4	11	17	7
Sheffield Wed.	11	1	3	7	11	23	6
Charlton Ath.	10	1	2	7	8	20	5



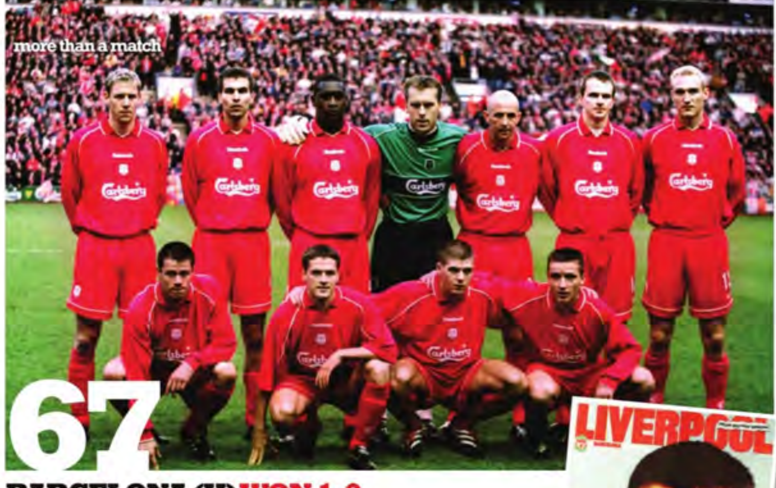
BOLTON WANDERERS (WEMBLEY) WON 2-1

Coca-Cola Cup final 2 April 1995

The only silverware of Roy Evans' reign as manager was secured on an afternoon that many regard as Steve McManaman's finest in a Liverpool shirt. Macca's magic feet mesmerised the Bolton defence throughout a sun-drenched afternoon beneath the Twin Towers and it was his two solo goals that clinched the club's fifth victory in the competition. Opponents Bolton may have been a division lower but they arrived at Wembley with a reputation as giant killers. For many in the Liverpool team this was their first experience of a big cup final occasion but on the day they proved too strong for the gallant Trotters. It took something special to break the deadlock and it came from McManaman who glided past two defenders before beating the keeper with a perfectly placed effort. His second came in the 68th minute when he cut in from the left before curling a low shot into the far corner. Although Alan Thompson pulled a goal back Liverpool hung on for victory and McManaman walked away with the man-of-the-match award.







67

BARCELONA (H) WON 1-0

UEFA Cup semi-final second leg 19 April 2001

For the new generation of Liverpudlians this was a taste of how it used to be. With the Reds on the cusp of a first European final since 1985 interest in the game was immense. The clamour for tickets had not been seen since the 1960s and 70s and the atmosphere was also a throwback to the glory days of the past. With the tie evenly poised at 0-0 there was everything to play for and it was Liverpool, on the stroke of half-time, who took the lead. Dutch ace Patrick Kluivert handled in the area following a corner and veteran midfield schemer Gary McAllister held his nerve to successfully beat a young Pepe Reina from the spot. At the opposite end Sander Westerveld produced a stunning save to deny Rivaldo and as Barca piled on the pressure after the break the atmosphere became more and more tense. It was hearts-in-the-mouth stuff at times but the Reds defence held firm and a place in the final was confirmed amid ecstatic scenes. The great days of old were back.





Ruddock's late thumping header makes it three apiece

66

MANCHESTER UNITED (H) DREW 3-3

Premier League 4 January 1994

Three down to your greatest rivals after just 23 minutes, with a capacity home crowd staring on in disbelief and millions watching at home on TV – this was not how Anfield anticipated welcoming in the New Year in 1994. Manchester United were threatening to run riot and an embarrassing defeat looked all but certain. What followed was one of the most thrilling revivals in Liverpool history. A minute after Denis Irwin added to earlier strikes by Steve Bruce and Ryan Giggs by netting United's third, Nigel Clough pulled a goal back then struck again before the interval. The visitors had chances to wrap up the points after the break but with a vociferous Kop willing them on Liverpool eventually got their reward when Neil Ruddock headed home to complete the fight-back with 11 minutes remaining.




CROWN

65 ARSENAL (H)
WON 4-2
First Division 23 November 1946

The footballing headlines in November 1946 belonged solely to one man and it was this victory that cemented Jack Balmer's place in the record books. The previously much-maligned inside-forward had registered successive hat-tricks in Liverpool's preceding two games and now stood on the verge of footballing immortality if he could repeat the



THE MAGIC SPELL OF LIVERPOOL F.C.

Balmer's extraordinary hat-trick successes

WINNING GOAL DISPUTED

Everton's defeat at Stoke



RIMMER'S TIMELY TRY FOR LANCASHIRE

Cumberland fought back splendidly

feat against Arsenal. Not surprisingly all eyes were on Anfield to see if Balmer could deliver and it was he who opened the scoring with a penalty after 15 minutes. The Gunners hit back to lead 2-1 at the break but when the man-of-the-moment netted again to draw Liverpool level everything was set up for a unique moment in history. An air of excitement took hold of Anfield and Balmer didn't disappoint. Just seven minutes after his equaliser he put the Reds ahead and the cheers that greeted this goal were reported to be the 'loudest Anfield has ever known'. Stubbins later added a fourth as Liverpool moved two points clear at the top of the table but there was only one name on everybody's lips afterwards.

64 BENFICA (A)
WON 4-1
European Cup third round second leg 21 March 1984

In what was the biggest game of Joe Fagan's managerial tenure to date, Liverpool overwhelmed their illustrious hosts with one of the most impressive away displays produced by an English club in European competition. The 'Eagles of Lisbon' may not have been the force they were when winning two European Cups in the 1960s but to beat them so emphatically in front of their own fans sent a warning out to the rest of the Continent. By withdrawing Kenny Dalglish into a deeper lying midfield role Fagan got his tactics spot on. The English champions weathered an early storm before turning on the style and, assisted by the eccentric goalkeeping of Bento, first-half goals from Ronnie Whelan and Craig Johnston put the outcome of the tie beyond doubt. Nene managed a consolation for the hosts but further goals from Ian Rush and Whelan again, ensured that the pride of Portugal were soundly beaten.





LIVERPOOL SURPRISE VILLA.

FIRST TIME IN F.A. CUP FINAL.

NO CAVILLING.

63 ASTON VILLA (WHITE HART LANE)
WON 2-0
FA Cup semi-final 28 March 1914

Liverpool upset the odds to secure their first appearance in the FA Cup final. White Hart Lane was the neutral setting but against the reigning cup holders – and a club that could boast five previous cup triumphs – Tom Watson's men had been given little chance by the London press. The wily Watson duly delivered a rousing pre-match team-talk to inspire his men. Glaswegian inside-forward Jimmy Nicholl was the goalscoring hero, with team-mate Bill Lacey tormenting the opposition. Cue wild celebrations among the fans who had journeyed south and those back in Liverpool who craved success in the FA Cup.





62

INTER MILAN (A) WON 1-0

Champions League 1st KO round second leg 11 March 2008



It may have taken 43 years but when it finally arrived revenge was sweet. The Inter ghosts of the San Siro that had haunted Liverpool since 1965 were laid to rest. Rafa's Reds led 2-0 from the first leg but progression to the last eight of the Champions League was no foregone conclusion and Inter were confident of repeating the result of their predecessors four decades previous. Once again a hostile reception greeted Liverpool in Milan but backed by a vociferous army of travelling fans the visitors were professional and clinical in equal measure, delivering the sucker punch of an away goal in the 63rd minute. Fernando Torres was the scorer, expertly firing home from a Gerrard pass. The tie was over and Liverpool had taken another prized European scalp to avenge Shankly's darkest hour.

61

EVERTON (H) WON 3-2

First Division 21 November 1970

Two goals up with 20 minutes left, reigning champions Everton were coasting to victory until the most stirring of derby comebacks kicked in. Against an inexperienced Liverpool side with seven derby debutants, goals from Alan Whittle and Joe Royle had given the Blues what looked to be an unassailable lead. Evertonians were already celebrating victory until rookie winger Steve Heighway pulled a goal back after 69 minutes. Liverpool pressed for an equaliser and it arrived seven minutes later via the head of John Toshack. The Kop burst into song with a rousing rendition of *You'll Never Walk Alone* and with the decibels inside the ground growing louder by the minute the Reds continued to attack. With six minutes remaining full back Chris Lawler slammed home a sensational winner (right) to snatch victory and Anfield duly erupted.



NEXT MONTH: PART FIVE


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Altogether now

From first XI to senior squad and coaching staff – charting the changing nature of the Liverpool Football Club team shot over the last six decades

57/58

The great Billy Liddell is pride of place in the middle of the front bench two years before Bill Shankly's arrival. Back row left to right: John Molyneux (full-back), Johnny Wheeler (wing-half who'd played for Bolton in the 'Matthews Final' of 1953), Tom Younger (goalie for Scotland at the 1958 World Cup), Laurie Hughes (title winner in 1947), Ronnie Moran (future Boot Room stalwart) and Don Campbell (full-back). Front row: Brian Jackson (outside-right), Tony Rowley (Welsh striker of Italian descent), 'King Billy', John Evans (with Rush and Fowler one of just three LFC players to score five in a game) and Alan A'Court (winger).

64/65

It's the same club crest but the rugby-style jerseys have given way to cool round collars as League champions Liverpool pose with the trophy in the heady days of Merseybeat. On this day, 12 August 1964, The Beatles are joined in the Top 40 by Cilla Black, Billy Fury, Billy J Kramer, The Merseybeats, Searchers, Swinging Blue Jeans, Fourmost, Mojos, and Ken Dodd. Back row: Gordon Milne, Gerry Byrne, Tommy Lawrence, Ronnie Moran, Willie Stevenson, Bob Paisley. Front row: Reuben Bennett, Ian Callaghan, Roger Hunt, Ian St John, (chairman) TV Williams, Ron Yeats, Alf Arrowsmith, Peter Thompson and Bill Shankly.

70/71

Spot anything unusual about this photo? Firstly it's taken in the car park at Melwood, and secondly those spindly tree branches betray a wintery feel – it was shot on 7 January 1971. Bill Shankly's first-team squad is getting bigger, although veteran keeper Tommy Lawrence and centre-half Ron Yeats both leave for Tranmere Rovers this year. Middle row, second from left, is young Scouse midfielder John McLaughlin, rated by his manager as 'the best schoolboy prospect for a very long time'. He'll play 30 consecutive league games in 1970/71, his best season for LFC, but his career will be ended by a knee injury at the age of just 24.

74/75



Something of a curio: late July in 1974 sees Bill Shankly pose with his FA Cup-winning squad in front of Anfield's Main Stand and Paddock – but there's no trophy to be seen and Shanks has just announced his retirement. New signing Ray Kennedy (see page 58) is second from right on a back row of decidedly shaggy hairstyles, from left to right: Chris Lawler, Phil Boersma, Larry Lloyd, Ray Clemence, Frank Lane, John Toshack, the new boy and Phil Thompson. Front row: Brian Hall, Alec Lindsay, Ian Callaghan, Tommy Smith, Bill Shankly, Emlyn Hughes, Steve Heighway, Peter Cormack and Kevin Keegan.

84/85



Just room for all the silverware in August 1984 as Joe Fagan's treble winners pose with, from left to right, the Manager of the Year trophy, Milk (League) Cup, Canon League Division One trophy and the European Cup. It's Crown Paints, it's shiny pinstripes and V-necks, and it's total dominance. Back row: Michael Robinson, Gary Gillespie, Bob Bolder, Alan Hansen, Bruce Grobbelaar, Mark Lawrenson and John McGregor. Middle row: Ronnie Moran, John Wark, Ronnie Whelan, Ian Rush, Steve Nicol, David Hodgson and Roy Evans. Front row: Sammy Lee, Phil Thompson, Phil Neal, the boss, Kenny Dalglish, Alan Kennedy and Paul Walsh.

89/90

After Heysel and just post-Hillsborough, the close-season in 1989 sees player-manager Kenny Dalglish and his squad seated with the FA Cup clinched in an emotional final against Everton two months earlier. By now Adidas have succeeded Umbro as kit makers, with Candy (Italian domestic appliances) the shirt sponsors. This season will be the last to date in which the Reds win the top-flight title. Back row: Molby, Gillespie, Hooper, Ablett, Grobbelaar, Staunton and Hysen. Middle row: Evans, Houghton, Rush, Watson, Aldridge, Venison, Burrows and Moran. Front row: Barnes, Nicol, Hansen, the boss, Whelan, McMahon and Beardsley.

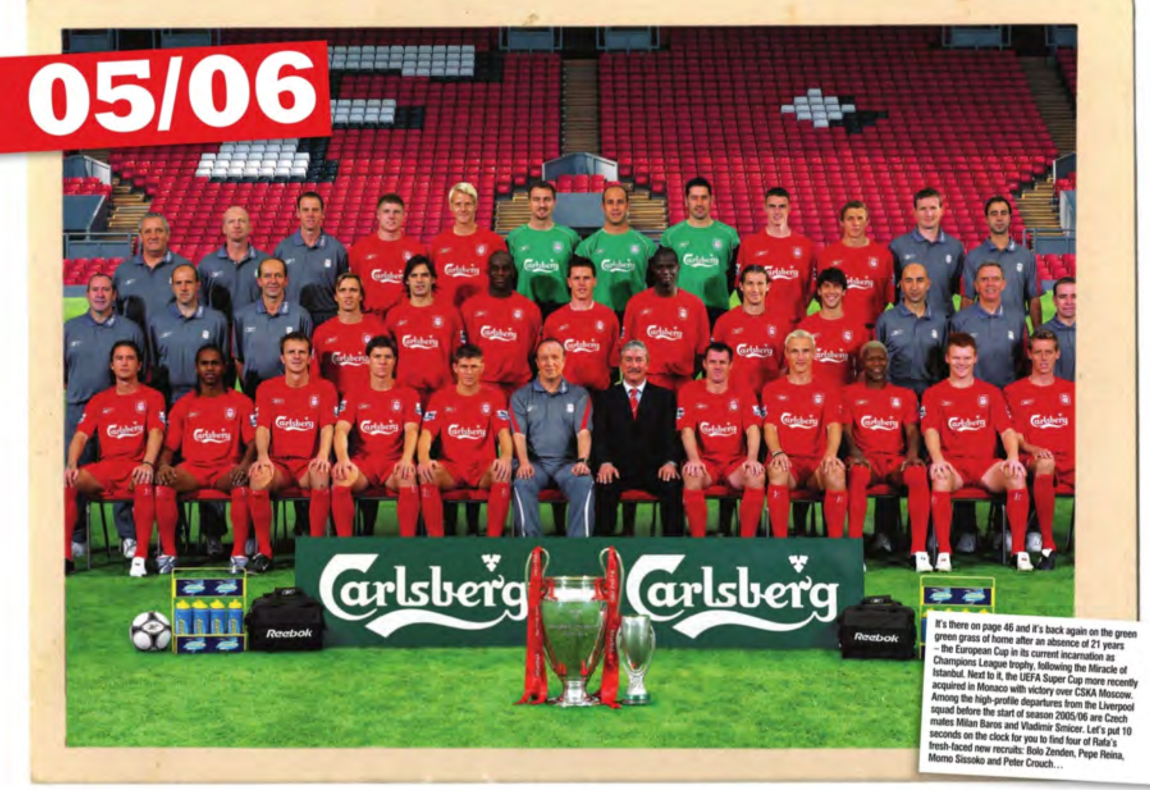
94/95

It's the mid-Nineties and baggy shirts and shorts are all the rage in football. This team shot from autumn 1994 shows manager Roy Evans, who'd taken over from Graeme Souness the previous January, with a squad that includes his two new signings John Scales and Phil Babb – central defenders who will play with Neil Ruddock in a new three-at-the-back formation. Anfield stalwarts John Barnes and Ian Rush are still here but Steve Nicol (back row third from right) will join Notts County in four months' time as player-coach. This season the Reds will win the Coca-Cola Cup. Kenny Dalglish's Blackburn Rovers will claim the title.

02/03

One of the first 'modern' team photo-calls brings the entire Liverpool squad together with manager Gerard Houllier and his extensive backroom staff plus club chairman David Moores – all in a professionally-lit set up on the immaculate pitch at Anfield. There's a bonus point if you came name all four goalkeepers pictured on the back row… They are: Patrice Luzi (whose only first-team appearance came as a substitute in a 1-0 win at Chelsea in January 2004 when Bruno Cheyrou got the winner), Chris Kirkland, Jerzy Dudek and Pegguy Arphexad. And that's our very own columnist Neil Mellor far left on the back row.

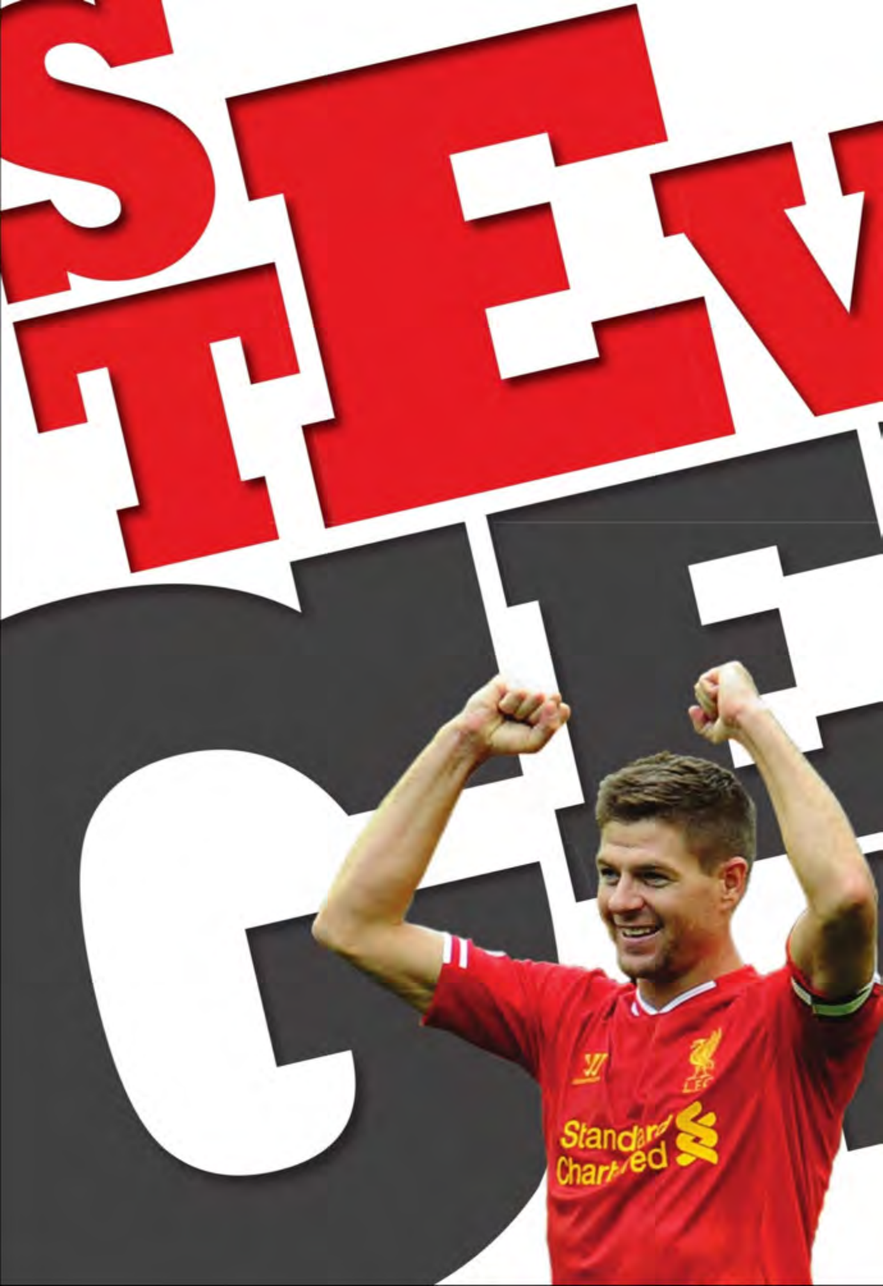
05/06



It's there on page 46 and it's back again on the green green grass of home after an absence of 21 years – the European Cup in its current incarnation as Champions League trophy, following the Miracle of Istanbul. Next to it, the UEFA Super Cup more recently acquired in Monaco with victory over CSKA Moscow. Among the high-profile departures from the Liverpool squad before the start of season 2005/06 are Czech mates Milan Baros and Vladimir Smicer. Let's put 10 seconds on the clock for you to find four of Rafa's fresh-faced new recruits: Bolo Zenden, Pepe Reina, Momo Sissoko and Peter Crouch…



Bang up-to-date with the class of 2013/14, featuring manager Brendan Rodgers, a 26-man first-team squad and an 18-strong support staff framed by the livery of the club's official partners Standard Chartered and Warrior. In the hectic calendar of a football club of this stature, today's photo-call is a complex undertaking requiring a degree of strategic planning – it can only take place after the transfer window closes (to include the latest signings) when the season is already underway and the players have domestic and often international commitments as well as training, preparation and of course matchdays to work around.




IN HIS OWN
WORDS



Portrait by John Powell

Carra the pundit

I've enjoyed watching him on TV. As he's become accustomed to the set-up he's got better and better. Going in there to work for such a big company with millions of people watching at home must be really tough at first. You know everyone is scrutinising you. Jamie's a natural, which I always thought he would be. He's really liked by viewers and I'm pleased it's going so well.

Not having him at the club was strange when the season started. Everyone knows we're close – Jamie Carragher was always the first person I looked for in the dressing-room and around the training ground. He was always there for me. So for him to be gone took some adjusting to. Although he's not with Liverpool anymore we've still got a good relationship and obviously that won't change.

Since he left I'm probably not as close to anyone else. I've slightly taken a back seat among the group. That doesn't mean I'm not there for the players, I am. I get on well with all of them, the young lads and those who are nearer to my age. As captain I use my experience to help everyone and guide them along. That's my role. They know they can always come to me if they need advice.

What Fergie said

To be honest, initially I was a little disappointed by what he wrote. I have a lot of respect for Alex Ferguson and the job he did at Man United. As a football fan I know how big a figure he is in the game. But since then I haven't lost any sleep over it. This is a man who's praised me many, many times and tried to buy me so I can't take those comments too seriously.

He brought a book out and had to say certain things to sell it and make the Manchester United fans happy. That might be why he chose to have a go at me and Liverpool. One day I'd like to bump in to him, have a chat about it and see what he really thinks. I'd ask him if he's changed his mind on me as a player.

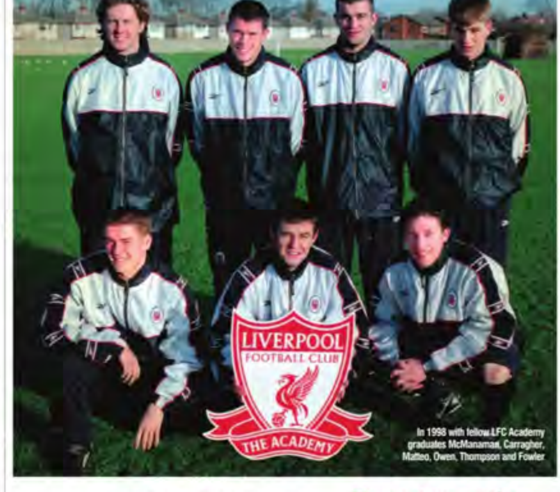
For me the most important thing is that my current managers – Brendan Rodgers and Roy Hodgson – rate me. Their opinions are all that really count.

The future for England

The FA is trying hard to improve the situation. That's why they've set up a commission [to increase the number of English players playing at the highest level of club football]. I think it has to start from the bottom of the game and go right to the top. There is no point in making small changes

"It's not just about talent – you have to possess determination and drive"

– it has to cover all levels. For me, Germany are a great example to follow. It's quite a while since they made the type of big decisions I'm talking about regarding player development. The fruits of that are there for everyone to see now. They've got an impressive national side and lots of players doing well in the Champions League. It takes time to happen and people need to be patient. Long-term though the goal has to be bringing through enough quality players to help us win a European Championships or World Cup.



In 1998 with fellow LFC Academy graduates McManaman, Carragher, Matteo, Owen, Thompson and Fowler

What it takes to make it

There isn't just one element – it's down to a lot of different factors. I think you have to be born with some talent, then if you get the right coaching along the way that helps you to develop and improve.

I've already mentioned the system of player development changing. You can't just rely on that. Players need to take responsibility too, no matter what age they are. You have to possess a certain level of determination and drive. You have to make big sacrifices and you have to posses something inside you that pushes you on to make it to the top.

Jamie Carragher is a prime example of what I'm talking about. He had talent and he was coached and improved. But he also had that immense drive to be the best player that he could and make it in the game. There are other footballers too, like John Terry. They have that self-motivation and the heart required to be the best.

I've seen probably thousands of players who, in terms of just ability, were definitely good enough to make it. Some of those lads had more ability than me and plenty of other professionals I know who have had great careers. But what they didn't have were the other elements that you need – such as that determination to work hard or a willingness to make the sacrifices. As a result they fell by the wayside because talent alone simply isn't enough. You have to do everything required to make the most of it.

The next generation

When I was growing up my life was all about the game. My dad and brother were huge Liverpool fans and that had an impact on me. Football was a priority for all of us and I was encouraged to play. I had kits, boots, balls and everything else. Nowadays kids have computer games, the internet and lots of other distractions, so it's no surprise they aren't as engrossed in football or go on to pursue it. That's not their fault – but it must have an impact on the number of players coming through.

Without whom...

I've got a lot of people to thank for getting me to this point in my career. Of course I've made the sacrifices I mentioned earlier, put plenty of graft in and played the games. However, without the likes of Hughie McAuley, Dave Shannon and Steve Heighway at Liverpool along the way I couldn't have done it.

Then there is also the guidance and help from my dad and brother and close family around me. You can't get to the top without other people. It's not just an individual accomplishment. From a very young age I always had it drilled in to me that football's a team game and that is definitely true.

First trip to Anfield

The first time I went to at Anfield will always stand out in my mind. It was a League Cup game against Coventry

City in 1986. Steve Heighway invited me along and sorted out the tickets for us in the old Kemlyn Road stand [now the Centenary Stand]. I remember walking in and seeing the pitch under the lights. It looked amazing and gave me such a buzz. It was a strange game – Jan Molby scored three penalties. That was my first taste of what real football was about with big stadiums and big crowds. I realised there was an expectation on the players. It gave me more hunger to study the game and follow Liverpool even more closely.

During that period my frame of mind swung quite a lot, from high to low. At one point I thought: maybe this isn't for me, maybe this level is too much. Then I'd play again and think: yeah, this is for me. I feel comfortable. I can handle this and I can still improve. Slowly I grew in confidence and it went from there.

Never stop learning

Every player is human and will make mistakes. People always ask about the big matches that went right and what I contributed. I've often found that I've learned more from the games where I haven't played well or I've made an error. When I've come away from those games and had to analyse where I've gone wrong it's taught me more and drove me on to improve.

> **"Often you learn more from the games when you haven't played well"**

The new players

Simon Mignolet has been outstanding for us in goal. Trying to fill the boots of Pepe Reina, who was a huge figure at this club for a long time, can't have been easy. Simon's made some brilliant saves at important times in matches and his performances were a major part of our good start to the season. He works really hard in training and I've been very impressed with him.

Mamadou Sakho is still young. He's only played a handful of games and the more he plays the more comfortable he looks. The big contribution he made to France's qualification for the World Cup will also benefit him. I think he'll prove to be a good acquisition for us.

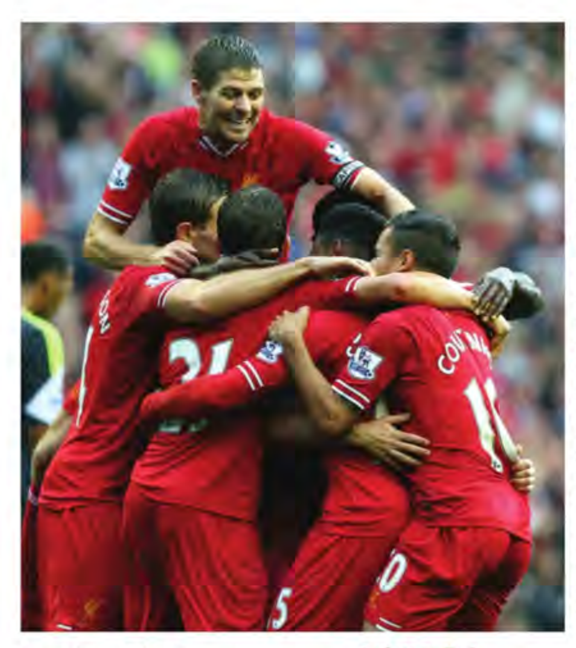
Kolo Toure has brought a lot of experience to the squad, which is important when you are trying to achieve success. He's been there and done it. Whenever he's played he's done well, and in a number of different positions. Kolo's been a big influence on the young lads in the squad already. He's helped me too. With Jamie gone it's good to have another player of similar experience come in.

The boss

Brendan Rodgers took on a huge job at a very young age. It was a difficult time to come in at Liverpool and it was going to take a while for him to get his way of playing across



Winning his 108th cap in the friendly v Germany



to the whole squad. I think that's happened and everyone here now knows what's expected of them. You have to give him a lot of credit for what he's done already. We finished his first season in good form and then started this campaign well. I think we've got a really good manager. He's always talking to me about my game and his own role too. He'll explain what he has to do or how he approaches different situations.

A vintage Red

As you get older I think you appreciate playing more, I've certainly found that. It's partly because experience makes you realise how privileged you are to be in this position. At times it's not easy. There is pressure and sacrifices and you need to keep delivering. At Liverpool and England everyone wants the best – only wins are good enough. But I know I can't go on forever and want to make the most of it while I can.

My Foundation

Football has been really good to me, so basically I wanted to give a little back to the city that has helped me so much. I think I can use my contacts in the game to help kids who are in a less privileged position.

Working with the Foundation [for more information please visit www.stevengerrardfoundation.org] has made me appreciate my life. It's made me realise how lucky I am to have my health and for my family to be healthy. It's a real eye-opener when I go in to a hospital or some of the other places we've worked with. You get a close up look at some of the difficulties kids and their families are facing on a daily basis. Being able to give a little bit back and help them in any way is very humbling.

To the future

Every player that gets well in to their 30s naturally starts to think about what they will do when they retire. We all know we can't go on forever. I'll definitely consider following Carra into punditry. Management is something else that, right now, appeals to me too. If the opportunity to be in charge of Liverpool ever came along I'd be interested. Before then a lot would have to happen. I'd have to show I was a good manger because the club only wants the best.

I'd also need to have a certain level of experience. I'm not sure if I would take a job lower down the leagues first, I can't say for certain. What I can say is I've already got a decent knowledge of the role from the great managers I've worked with in the past. And right now I'm learning lots from Brendan and Roy.

At the moment though management is not my priority. I'm a player and I'm confident I've still got a few more good years left in me. I want to achieve things with this team and I think we can. That's my only focus right now and that's the way it should be.

Interview: John Hynes

GIVING A BIT BACK

The Reds skipper played his part in the BBC's recent *Children In Need* appeal, appearing with Lucas and Luis Suarez in a short film thanking schoolchildren up and down the country for their hard work and dedication in helping to fundraise millions of pounds for the charity.

The boys visited Anfield Juniors, a partner school of the Liverpool FC Foundation, to take part in fundraising activities including egg-and-spoon races and football skills sessions. They each had their own mini-teams, comprising 20 kids in total, with Lucas' line-up coming top – cheered on by Liverpool FC's official mascot Mighty Red as well as Pudsey Bear.

As part of the partnership Anfield Juniors is involved in a new Foundation project called On the Ball, which aims to use the power of the LFC badge to positively impact on attendance, aspiration, attainment, health, wellbeing and confidence. Steven said on the day, "BBC Children in Need is a fantastic charity and it's great to come out and support the work that they do."



1

the one and only...

Ray Kennedy

It was a mark of Boot Room genius when Ray Kennedy was converted from a striker with a healthy goalscoring ratio into an equally effective left-sided midfielder. Having registered 71 times in 212 games for Arsenal, the big Geordie arrived at Anfield on the same day in July 1974 that Bill Shankly – the man who signed him – retired from football. "He is big, brave and strong," Shanks told the media. "Ray's signing means we now have the greatest strength in depth that we have ever had." By the end of 1975/76 he was a League and UEFA Cup winner, and over the next five years Kennedy missed just five First Division games and accrued three winner's medals in the European Cup. In 393 Liverpool appearances he scored a creditable 72 goals.

1. League champion with Phil Thompson and fan in May 1980.
2. All smiles after scoring in a 5-0 rout of Derby County in October 1978.
3. Frustration and despair during elimination from the 1978/79 European Cup at the hands of Nottingham Forest.
4. Shooting v Bayern Munich in the goalless first leg of the European Cup semi-final of April 1981.
5. And shaking hands with Bayern's Paul Breitner before his goal in the second leg secured a place in the final.




2


4

Bill Shankly, the manager who signed him, described Ray as "big, brave and strong"


3


5

Love supreme #3

The third in our series profiling the world's leading Liverpool FC experts

GUDMUNDUR MAGNUSSON & ARNIE BALDURSSON STATISTICS



Gudmundur (left) and Arnie

Gudmundur: I was born in Reykjavik where Liverpool's first European game took place in 1964. I chose Liverpool to represent me when I was 10 years old in a computer game called *Match Day* and that was the point of no return. I've been in the IT business for close on 20 years, and I started compiling stats in 1999 when I was working on the website for the Icelandic supporters club. It quickly developed from there.

Today as well as lfchistory.net we run three other websites: shankly.com, bobpaisley.com and billyliddell.com, and we will add our fifth in the near future. We'll soon release an iPhone app too.

Arnie: For a living I translate shows like *Breaking Bad* and weekly Premier League programmes for an Icelandic TV network. Liverpool's history was introduced to me by Derek Hodgson's 1980 book *The Liverpool Story*. I can't explain why it resonated so strongly and stirred this great passion. It was somehow meant to be.



I was introduced to pure stats through Brian Pead's records book. I've never been fascinated with stats alone but more by the stories that surround them. For example when writing *The Liverpool Encyclopedia* I discovered that when Liverpool won the First Division for the first time in 1900/01 they were only top of the league on two occasions – the first day of the season and the last.

We commenced work on the book in October 2012 and finished in August 2013. Even though the subject matter is close to one's heart the process can be tortuous – the writing takes every spare minute you have outside your normal job and sometimes you work long into the night.

GUY MITCHELL POSTERS

I'm a London Red and always have been. My brother is eight years older than me and also a big Liverpool fan, so as you can imagine I copied him and wanted to join in the fun. I went to my first game aged 10 in 1986, the Charity Shield. My first Anfield experience was seeing us beat Coventry City 4-0 in 1993 with a Walters hat-trick and a Burrows 25-yard screamer!

Form a young age I always considered LFC to hold a certain dignity and be a club for the fans. As soon as I visited the city I was hooked – I could really relate to the family values that the supporters have even if their siblings supported Everton. I like to think that even in the modern age a lot of this still stands.



I collect many things including shirts, badges, programmes, stickers and cards, and as you can see from the photo I have thousands all organised into folders in a wardrobe. I also have thousands of magazines in my loft. But my main obsession at the moment is posters or pictures of the whole team. I have close to 500. As well as the obvious ones from *Shoot*, *Match* and *Goal* magazines, my favourites are the super-large ones made in the 1970s and 80s and often found at the time for sale in Woolworths or Athena.

My friends who support LFC take an interest in my collection. My wife just about puts up with it and understands that everyone needs a hobby!

"I have 500 team posters – my favourites are the large ones from the 70s and 80s"



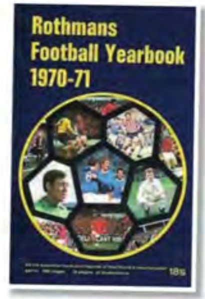
GED REA
STATISTICS

Attending my first game as a four-year old and witnessing the Kop in full flow, I was bitten by the bug. I can still remember sitting in awe in the Main Stand to this day.

I was always interested in numbers at school and kept scrapbooks of match reports. This developed into compiling stats and lists of all things LFC. So I had records of Liverpool FC before I was invited by the club to do what I do now.

As well as all the books of stats that I've compiled I also have a collection of Rothmans Football Annuals dating back to 1970. I must use at least one of them every single day.

I wish there was a record of times for every Liverpool goal scored. The excellent www.lfchistory.net website has done a fabulous job tracking down most of them, but I would've loved the reporters of the day to have looked into their crystal ball and seen how important a goal-time stat was going to become in the future – for anoraks like me at least!



"I wish there was a record of times for every goal scored"

My personal 'holy grail' will be all the stats and snippets of information from Liverpool's 19th league title – hopefully they will not be too long in arriving.

I have a room full of books and an extensive computer database. Some friends and like-minded people are impressed and fascinated by both the quantity and quality of information I have collated. Some close family members think I am insane.





GERARD SCULLY
MEMORABILIA

I watched the 1971 FA Cup final and when Steve Heighway, who just happened to play for the Republic of Ireland, scored the first goal it sealed my allegiance to Liverpool FC. For a guy that was born on 13 April 1963, when Liverpool beat Manchester United 1-0 with a St John goal, I was fated to support them!

It was a slow start, given that I was geographically-challenged living in Ireland and only eight years of age. My mum and dad were bewildered by my interest in this 'foreign game'. In Ireland at that time the Gaelic Athletic Association, which promoted hurling & Gaelic Football, effectively waged a

'ban' against all but their games, so my interest was treated with a degree of suspicion.

Over the next decade, my passion for the club grew. Just after the 1974 FA Cup final I saw an advert in *Shoot!* magazine for the Manchester Programme Shop and after persuading my mum to buy me a postal order, I sent for the programme from the game.

Today I collect scrapbooks, annuals, badges, cigarette cards, postcards, player shirts, autographs, tickets, videos, CDs, DVDs – if it has Liverpool FC on it, I'll collect it. My most treasured item is Bill Shankly's tracksuit from the 1972/73 season. I'd love to track down the programmes for the 1914 FA Cup final v Burnley and the 1922 Charity Shield v Huddersfield, and also the programmes from the USA tour matches in 1946 and 1948.

I store programmes in A4 boxes and folders. The cards and tickets are sorted alphabetically in specially-designed plastic sleeves and placed in ring binders. A lot of what I have is catalogued in boxes so that I know what I have and what I'm missing. I originally had the collection in a converted garage, but when I got married I converted the attic into an office and that's where it is now stored. My only concern now is that I am running out of space.

My wife is very understanding and even allowed me to re-mortgage the house many years ago to purchase some programmes from 1892. I've obviously influenced my six-year-old daughter to some degree because she's now quite careful about the condition of her Barbie comics!



JONNY STOKKELAND
STATISTICS

It's been Liverpool for me as long as I can remember, and that is back to the early 1970s. I became an early member of the Norwegian LFC supporters club in the autumn of 1980. Torbjorn Flatin, now editor of *The Kopite* and www.liverpool.no, helped me to buy some old history books, and then came Brian Pead's *Complete Record* book in 1986 and Doug Lamming's *Who's Who* in 1989.

I visited Liverpool for the first time in 1992 and have now been around 40 times. Together with [fellow statistician] Eric Doig I have visited libraries and archives all over England, looking for new information on Liverpool FC and correcting old errors that have been made by others and copied again and again. Many ex-players have been of great help. I must also thank George Rowlands, Stephen Done, Kjell Hanssen, Gordon Small and many others for their help and time.

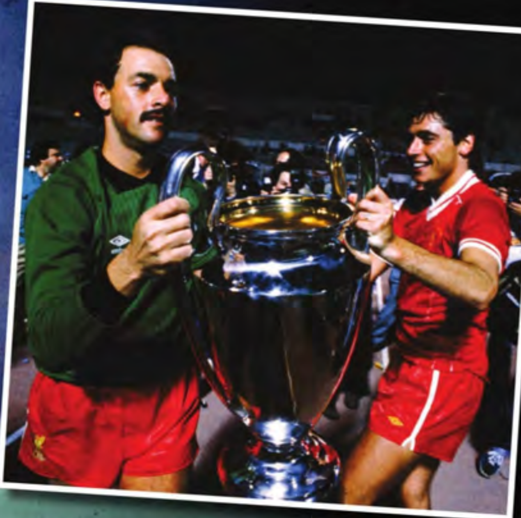
My most treasured item is a share certificate from 1912 – it's now in the museum at Anfield. My 'holy grail'? I have heard there is a history book about Liverpool FC dating from around 1918. I would like to see that.

[My colleague] Sveinung Egeland has created a great PC programme where all the information can be stored. It includes a who's who of more than 4,500 names. We also collect match facts for all first-team, reserve and junior games going back to 1892, and we buy birth and death certificates to get all the data as correct as possible. Last year we signed a long-time contract with the club to make our collection the LFC official archives.

What do my family and friends think? That I'm crazy!

"No could

Michael Robinson was with Liverpool for only 18 months in the early 1980s. In that time he played understudy to Kenny Dalglish and Ian Rush, scored 13 goals in 52 appearances, and won three winner's medals – League, Milk Cup and European Cup. Now 55, the former Republic of Ireland centre-forward lives and works in Madrid, hosting *Informe Robinson* (The Robinson Report) on Canal+ has established himself as one of the most recognisable personalities in the Spanish media…





You joined Liverpool from Brighton in August 1983 – didn't Everton want you too?
I had no previous notion that Liverpool were after me. I knew Seville in Spain had made enquiries as well as Everton and Newcastle. I'd spoken to Howard Kendall over the phone and he was very endearing. But I never wanted to sign for them because I'd grown up as a Liverpool fan when Everton were the enemy and the monied elite. Back in the 1960s they were known as the 'Bank of England club' with the manager Harry Catterick throwing money at anything that moved.

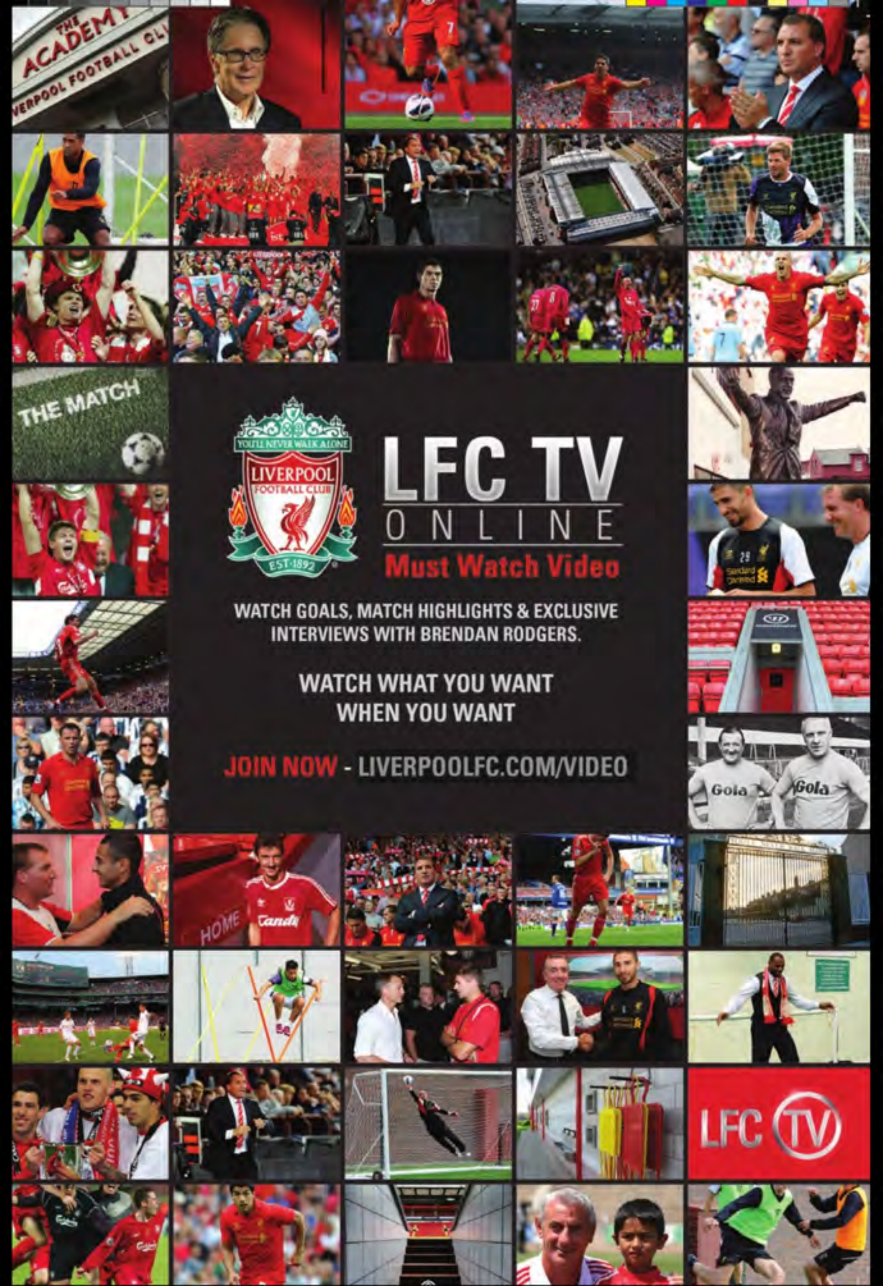
Joe Fagan and Bob Paisley were there at Anfield when I went to sign the contract and I asked them whether I could have a coffee or some fizzy water. "Here's a beer lad," Joe told me. "Get that down your neck." Later Joe asked me whether I had any other questions. "How do you want me to play?" Bob and Joe looked at each other, smiled, then Joe took charge. "We rather hope that you know how to play, otherwise we're going to lose a lot of money here." According to the system, I meant. Joe put his hand around my shoulder, sat me down and said, "Listen lad, we play 11 players here – just to make sure we aren't disadvantaged. In midfield when we get the ball we try to kick it to somebody dressed the same colour as us. If you can, Michael, kick it in the net, and if you can't, kick it to somebody who can. Then at the back we're going to make sure the oppo don't score." "There's no more to it than that?" I asked. "You'll find, Michael, that we leave players to figure it out for themselves. But we'll help along the way. This isn't a major science – you'll work it out."

> "For me Anfield was more imposing as a Liverpool player than an opposing one"

How was Liverpool different to other football clubs?
The attitude throughout the club was that if we didn't do well, anybody could beat us. If we did do well, nobody could beat us. It was a humble attitude. I remember once before a game against Brentford in the League Cup, Graeme Souness had the dressing-room buzzing like we were playing against Manchester United. There was no complacency – ever. I used to have this recurring nightmare of Ronnie Moran's voice: "Give it! Get it! Go!" He was the mouthpiece for the coaching staff, the taskmaster.

How important was Graeme Souness?
Graeme was my best mate, a wonderful man. Friendship apart he was the greatest footballer I've ever played with. Graeme was also a misunderstood soul. There was a varnish around him – an aura. But once you chipped off that varnish, I found him a very personal cuddly chap who was actually quite vulnerable about being a human being with emotions. To this day he still tries very hard not to be this lovely cuddly person when really he is. We were bosom buddies. He saw me as a





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reasonably well-spoken kid and I think that he viewed that as different and interesting whereas I was completely in awe of him as a person and a footballer. We became extremely close friends and he looked after me when the times were hard at Liverpool. I love Graeme dearly. He has to be the greatest leader I've ever come across in my life. When he left Liverpool to go to Sampdoria, it was like losing five players all at once.

You struggled to meet expectations at Liverpool...

I always scored against Liverpool whoever I was playing for. But when you walked outside the left-hand dressing-room and down the stairs and past the imposing *This is Anfield* sign before hearing *You'll Never Walk Alone*, you'd wait for the Liverpool team to run out. They seemed like giants and it felt like being a lamb led to the slaughter. That seemed to be the role of the opposition player. When

"Souness was the greatest leader I've ever come across in my life"

I had the experience of being in the right-hand dressing room it was very different. I remember looking at the red jersey and it weighed so heavy. I'd walk out and touch the sign and *You'll Never Walk Alone* was now for me. I remember in some games half-wishing that I was that lamb again being led to the slaughter because there was no responsibility in that. Instead I had to be at the level of Liverpool Football Club and I wasn't too sure that I could be. Anfield was far more imposing to me as a Liverpool player than as a visiting player. That played on my mind and I thought about it far too much.

Rome 1984: no sweat

Still, the 1983/84 season was a memorable one for Liverpool, culminating in another European Cup final...

Being a part of it was just brilliant. When we got through the semi-final [beating Dinamo Bucharest] our options in the final were either Dundee United or Roma. I asked Graeme who he wanted, thinking with the greatest respect to Dundee that we'd batter them. It was potentially – and as it turned out to be – my only European final so I hoped Dundee won. I wanted the easiest opposition. But Liverpool were in the business of collecting trophies and Graeme had seen it all before. When I told Graeme about this, he looked at me like I'd just

"When they asked me to work in the media I felt like a kid with a blank canvas"



fallen out a tree. My nickname was 'Cat' because I always went in goal before training in the kickabout. "What are you going on about, Cat?" he stared at me. "We're the best team in the world. Nobody can beat us – it's impossible that we'll go to Rome and get beaten.'"

The following season after a brief spell with QPR you headed for Spain...
I had a frivolous image of Spain that included summer holidays, costas, cheap alcohol and chasing girls. But I also knew they were passionate about their football and they had these great teams called Real Madrid and Barcelona. When I first moved it wasn't a cultural choice. I only moved because I wanted to play football. I came over on 7 January 1987. I didn't know whether I was going to be here forever. What I did know was that I was going to receive an education – an education that I wanted. But something strange happened. I enjoyed more or less everything about Spain and the way the Spanish interpreted life. I finished up realising that I had loads in common with the Spaniards.

Then after retiring, opportunities arrived to work in the Spanish media...
I couldn't believe it when they asked me. I only had 100 words in Spanish and most were expletives! It was as if I had been given a blank canvas to play with all the paints and all the brushes that I wanted and create something completely out of my own imagination. I felt like I was a kid and been locked in *Toys R Us* and everybody had gone out. I've been very fortunate ever since.

Extract taken from Red Machine: Liverpool in the 1980s The Players' Stories, *by Simon Hughes. Book available from all major stockists including Amazon.*



A shot v Spurs in March 1984; and a skirmish with Everton's Kevin Ratcliffe in the derby of the same month

Six former Reds in Spain

Sammy Lee
Recommended by Robinson to Osasuna in 1987. Stayed for two seasons before signing for Southampton on loan.

John Aldridge
Scored 31 goals for Liverpool in 1988/89 then joined Real Sociedad where he was also prolific.

Steve McManaman
Won two Champions League and two La Liga titles with Real Madrid after moving on a Bosman in 1999.

Michael Owen
Left Liverpool for Spain and scored 16 times in his only season at Real Madrid before returning to England with Newcastle United.

Steve Finnan
Played four games for Espanyol after leaving Liverpool in the summer of 2008.

Jermaine Pennant
After a spell on loan at Portsmouth, the winger joined Real Zaragoza in 2009, making 26 appearances.

Studio pics courtesy of CANAL+



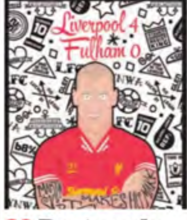


STEVIE STUNNERS
His best ever goals – your Tweets

The bit at the back for Liverpool's legions of fans at home and all over the world…









74 LFC TV'S Claire Rourke

76 Previewing the trip to City

82 Postcards on the Reds

93 Daniel on Instagram

The month

CARDIFF RETURN

The club from the Welsh capital come to Anfield for a League game for the first time since Bill Shankly took charge of the Reds for the first occasion – indeed the fixture will take place almost 54 years to the day since that landmark fixture. Shanks' side lost 4-0 to the Welshmen that day with City's prolific inside-right Derek Tapscott scoring twice. The modern-day Bluebirds will be out to repeat the away win with Brendan Rodgers hoping to get one over the club with whom he enjoyed a fierce rivalry during his time as manager of Swansea City.

DON'T MISS ANY OF THE BUILD-UP ON LFC TV



ACADEMY HIGHLIGHTS

There are some mouth-watering Academy clashes during December. After starting the month with home games against Aston Villa and Bolton, Alex Inglethorpe's Under 21s make the short trip to Everton on Monday 16 December. Meanwhile the U18s under Neil Critchley (left) host Man United on 7 December before making the trip to Man City a week later. Keep an eye on LFC TV listings for details of coverage.



A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS

Make your Christmas extra-special by booking your party at Anfield. Tickets for a fantastic variety of party entertainment and musical artists are available from only £39 per person. From tribute nights to live bands there's something to suit all tastes. Call the dedicated LFC Events team on 0151 263 7744.

ahead

ANNIVERSARIES

14 years since Steven Gerrard scored his first Liverpool goal on 5 December.
29 years since Jan Molby scored his first Liverpool goal on 1 December.
33 years since Ian Rush made his Liverpool debut on 13 December.
36 years since Liverpool beat Hamburg 6-0 in the Super Cup on 6 December.
88 years since Gordon Hodgson signed for Liverpool on 14 December.
121 years since Matt McQueen (right) scored his first LFC goal on 3 December.



BIRTHDAY XI

Nigel Spackman 53 on	2 Dec
Raheem Sterling 19 on	8 Dec
Jordon Ibe 18 on	8 Dec
Terry McDermott 62 on	8 Dec
Stig Inge Bjornebye 44 on	11 Dec
Steve Nicol 52 on	11 Dec
Daniel Agger 29 on	12 Dec
Victor Moses 23 on	12 Dec
Michael Owen 34 on	14 Dec
Martin Skrtel 29 on	15 Dec
Gary McAllister 49 on	25 Dec



Q&A: CLAIRE ROURKE PRESENTER & PRODUCER AT LFC TV



First game you attended as a fan?
Away at Villa Park when I was 10. The football team my dad managed was playing in the area so he took the opportunity to take me to the match. I was so small and remember seeing the pitch and just thinking how big everything was - I was in total awe.

Favourite player growing up?
Robbie Fowler gave me so many happy memories. I also liked Steve McManaman because he was just so exciting to watch. And another – which I kind of don't want to admit because I work with him now and he won't let me forget it! – was Jason McAteer.

First player you interviewed?
Fernando Torres. On my second day in the job I flew to Rotterdam where we were playing in a pre-season tournament. Torres scored his first goal in a Liverpool shirt and I had to interview him in Spanish.

How hard is it separating being a fan and doing your job?
I've been a Liverpool fan all my life so count myself incredibly fortunate to work for the club that I support. Admittedly when times are a little more testing you can take things to heart because you are a fan, but ultimately I think being a fan only makes me more determined to make LFC TV a success.

Assuming Istanbul is your favourite game, what's no2 on your list?
That's so difficult but I am going to say Real Madrid at Anfield in 2009. I worked for Real prior to being at Liverpool so that game had extra significance for me. When I left Spain a lot of my colleagues over there couldn't understand the decision, but when they came to Anfield on that night and experienced that atmosphere everything made sense.

Favourite away ground?
I honestly don't have a favourite. Last summer's game at the MCG will always stand out though – the rendition of *You'll Never Walk Alone* was one of those 'I was there' moments.

Who would you still like to interview for LFC TV?
I've interviewed so many people who have made this club what it is today, but one who we are yet to have on the red sofas and who we are desperate to, is Roger Hunt. I'd love to hear his Liverpool story first-hand. But also for me it's the moments you get to interview people in. So with that in mind I would love to be the one interviewing the Liverpool players when they have just won the league title. Hopefully I wont have to wait too much longer!

> **"Being a fan makes me more determined to make LFC TV a success"**

DON'T FORGET THE BUY-BACK SERVICE



Many of Liverpool FC's Premier League clashes at Anfield are sell-outs – but if you can't attend the game we have a suggestion for season-ticket holders. Why not return your seat using our Buyback service and receive credit against the cost of your 2014/15 season-ticket if your seat is re-sold to another official LFC member? Visit **www.liverpoolfc.com/tickets/ticket-exchange** or call **0843 170 5555** for details.



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You'll be able to access goals, highlights, reaction and analysis of every first-team game no matter where you are to ensure you keep right up-to-date with the latest action.

We'll bring you exclusive interviews direct from the club's training base with your favourite players, broadcast the manager's pre-match press conferences live every week and have footage from training as the lads prepare for games. There are also goals and action from the Reds' potential stars of tomorrow, with exclusive coverage of the Under 21s and U18s.

If that's not enough there's also a vast archive of historical content for you to access, including goals, highlights, interviews and features – from the trophy-laden years of Shankly, Paisley and Dalglish right up to the exciting new era under Brendan Rodgers.

Whether it be from Anfield, Melwood or the Academy we have got it covered and don't forget that via LFC TV Online you can also tune into the club's official television channel LFC TV with your subscription.



Coming up in the month of December on LFC TV, there will be plenty of Christmas-related content for you to enjoy, including two brand new episodes of Kop Kids. This highly-acclaimed series is going from strength to strength and the festive offerings are not to be missed.

After his world exclusive interview with the skipper, our reporter Finn gets his next big scoop as he sits down for a cuppa with Luis Suarez. Meanwhile Philippe Coutinho helps us brush up on our Portuguese and Raheem Sterling and Jordan Ibe meet Liverpool supporting magician Zamaan Ismail. We also take a closer look behind the scenes at Melwood with Victor Moses, and four Academy players battle it out in the latest Kop Kids challenge.

As well as being able to access the channel via LFC TV Online, LFC TV is also free to view on Sky channel 429 or Virgin channel 544. For full listings please visit www.liverpoolfc.com.



FIXTURES 13/14

AUGUST
17 Stoke City (H) 1-0
24 Aston Villa (A) 1-0
27 Notts County (H) (COC 2) 4-2*

SEPTEMBER
1 Manchester Utd (H) 1-0
16 Swansea City (A) 2-2
21 Southampton (H) 0-1
25 Manchester Utd (A) (COC 3) 0-1
29 Sunderland (A) 3-1

OCTOBER
5 Crystal Palace 3-1
19 Newcastle Utd 2-2
26 West Brom 4-1

NOVEMBER
2 Arsenal 0-2
9 Fulham 4-0
23 Everton (A) 12:45pm 3-3

DECEMBER
1 Hull City (A) 2:05pm
4 Norwich City (H) 7:45pm
7 West Ham Utd (H) 3:00pm
15 Tottenham H (A) 4:00pm
21 Cardiff City (H) 12:45pm
26 Manchester City (A) 5:30pm
29 Chelsea (A) 4:00pm

JANUARY 2013
1 Hull City (H) 3:00pm
4 FA Cup 3R (TBC)
12 Stoke City (A) 4:10pm
18 Aston Villa (H) 5:30pm
28 Everton (H) 8:00pm

FEBRUARY
1 West Brom (A)
8 Arsenal (H)
12 Fulham (A)
22 Swansea City (H)

MARCH
1 Southampton (A)
8 Sunderland (H)
15 Manchester Utd (A)
22 Cardiff City (A)
29 Tottenham H (H)

APRIL
5 West Ham Utd (A)
12 Manchester City (H)
19 Norwich City (A)
26 Chelsea (H)

MAY
3 Crystal Palace (A)
11 Newcastle Utd (H)
17 FA Cup final

* after extra-time

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Away days

Before the trip to City a play-writing Red recalls past matches at the Etihad and Maine Road

"I've been to see us play at Man City loads of times," says dramatist and Reds fan Nicky Allt. "Trips to Maine Road were one of the reasons why I got hooked on football at such a young age. My dad used to take me to away games and one of the first was at City, around 1974. It finished in a 1-1 draw.

"They had a strong team at that time, with players like Mike Summerbee, Colin Bell, Franny Lee and Denis Law. The atmosphere was great and I remember wanting to sample something like it again. I also thought the sky blue shirts versus our old red shirts on a rainy day in Manchester – it usually rained when we went there – made for a good spectacle. We were normally put in the big old stand called the Kippax, which was like the Kop but ran along the side of the pitch. They used to give us about a quarter of that and being by the home fans created a great atmosphere.

"My only reservation about going to City was the fact that we rarely won. Between 1966 and 1974 we only enjoyed one victory at their place – they regularly caused us problems."

As Bob Paisley's side grew to be the best in Europe during the second half of the 1970s that changed. Winning at Maine Road became a regular occurrence. "I remember one victory there in particular," continues Nicky.



Maine Road/Etihad Stadium



"It was Easter Monday 1976 and we were in pursuit of the title. We needed a win to stay in contention with a QPR side that had been at or near the top all season. It was a tight game, with a Steve Heighway goal giving us a narrow 1-0 lead in the second half. Then David Fairclough, who was only 19, scored twice in the last three minutes to give us victory.

"City's defenders, especially a guy called Mike Doyle, just couldn't live with him. There was a great photo in the newspaper the next day of Fairclough getting away from him despite Doyle almost dragging the shirt off his back. There must have been 10,000 of us there and afterwards we were all singing about winning the title. The journey home was great because there was a real sense of anticipation around becoming champions and the emergence of this great new player in Fairclough. Our last league game didn't take place until a few weeks later and we won 3-1 at Wolves to be crowned champions. It was Bob Paisley's first trophy."

What Allt describes as probably his most memorable trip to Man City's home came just over 12 months later. "It was the FA Cup semi-final against

> **"Games at City were one of the reasons I loved football"**

Everton and I was sat on the halfway line with my brother, again in the Kippax. They built a makeshift barrier right down the middle of the stand to divide the supporters.

"Both sections of fans were singing at the top of their voices. There were neighbours on either side of the barrier trying to out-sing each other. It was raucous but there was no trouble. I don't think anyone would have put up with someone causing hassle. I'd say it was similar to the type of lively crowd you see at a South American football match now. Again, it was the type of experience that made me fascinated with the game. The match finished in a 2-2 draw,


Manchester City v Liverpool
5.30pm Thursday 26.12.13

Oct 2008: Torres pounces as the Reds come back to win 3-2

with Evertonians complaining that a disallowed goal from Brian Hamilton right at the end should have stood. They were probably right."

Four days later it was back to the same venue for the replay. "I was delighted there was another game because I wanted to sample that atmosphere again. We won 3-0."

The best performance Nicky has witnessed against City on their turf came in the same competition. "It was the FA Cup quarter-final in 1988 and

> **"It was raucous in the away end when we scored late on"**

we won 4-0. We absolutely destroyed them. Liverpool were so good at the time that once they went 1-0 or 2-0 in front they just sat back and played on the break. With John Barnes and Peter Beardsley they had the ideal players for that type of game. It was like watching five-a-side. They kept counter-attacking and could easily have scored seven or eight.

"I usually remember cup matches or important league fixtures, they are what stick out in my mind. However one trip to City that meant nothing to us but will always be memorable occurred on the last day of the 1995/96 season. We were third and couldn't finish any higher or lower. But City were in danger of relegation.

"With the score-line at 2-2 they thought a draw would keep them up and started wasting time. Then they found out that they needed a win, but it was too late. It was a bizarre finish to a game and, walking out of the ground afterwards, we couldn't believe what had just gone on."

The next time we secured a 2-2 draw was in 2003. By then the Blues had moved to a new home at the City of Manchester Stadium, or what is now known as the Etihad. "We haven't had too much success there," Allt admits. "As a football fan you tend to remember victories rather than defeats. That's natural. You always want to forget a loss really quickly whereas you cherish a good win and every moment of it.

"That's probably why the only game at the venue that easily comes to mind for me is the 3-2 victory in 2008. We were 2-0 down at half-time, before Fernando Torres scored twice to level it. When Dirk Kuyt pounced for the winner in the last minute it was superb. That raucous moment reminded me of being a kid. It was similar to being back in The Kippax celebrating among the away fans."

Nicky's Official LFC History Show will be coming to theatres in 2014.ß



CLASSIC CLASH

**10.04.82 First Division
Man City 0 Liverpool 5**

Earlier in the season City had departed Anfield with a 3-1 Boxing Day victory that had left the Reds in 12th place and written-off. When the sides renewed acquaintances Liverpool were two points clear at the top. Their stunning turnaround in form continued at Maine Road as goals from Sammy Lee, Phil Neal, Craig Johnston, Alan Kennedy and Ian Rush helped them to demolish the hosts. The victory arrived during a sequence of 11 consecutive league victories that helped Bob Paisley's unit to become champions.





Working with children and adults to help inspire positive change through sport – follow us on Twitter **@LFCFoundation** to keep up to date with the community team's projects and activities



SKILLS & THRILLS

The Liverpool FC Foundation delivers a range of equality and inclusion programmes for children and adults both locally and overseas through a team of more than 20 qualified community coaches.

The programmes use the platform of football to provide opportunities to people of all ages and abilities from a range of diverse backgrounds that inspire positive change.



Reds midfielder Lucas and forward Luis Alberto recently dropped by one of the Liverpool FC Foundation's Respect4All football sessions for a kick-about with its local stars. The programme delivers free impairment specific multi-sport classes to more than 180 children and adults across Liverpool and Wirral every week.

The players met with a group enjoying their weekly football session at the Liverpool Respect4All centre based at St Margaret's CE School in Aigburth. The classes, which run four nights a week during school term time, cater for children and adults with severe learning difficulties, visual and physical impairment (ambulant) and wheelchair users.

Liverpool FC Foundation trustee Lucas said: "It's been a real pleasure to visit the Respect4All programme again. The participants are so enthusiastic and I am proud to be an active member of the club's charity."

The Respect4All programme opened its second centre at Woodchurch High School in Wirral last year to widen its provision in the community after the success of its Liverpool centre.

Luis Alberto and Lucas (above) at the Respect4All session



Ryan Moignard, project leader, added: "Respect4All is a fantastic programme which is well attended and supported by the local community. We offer tailored sessions with specialist coaches to provide local young people and adults with fun, engaging classes which really bring out their personalities and help them to develop new skills."





IT'S ON THE CARDS

They're whimsical, inventive and often inspired – and the work of one talented Liverpool fan

Welcome to one Liverpool fan's unique way of documenting each Reds match this season. Dave Williams, a designer and illustrator working in the city, produces a postcard after each first-team fixture – and his inventive artwork is proving popular with supporters.

Dave, who's been going to Anfield for two decades, explains how it all started: "Before the season I was browsing the internet and came across what's called 'fan art' for popular TV shows. The artists had created one image for each episode of a particular show, so by the end of the series there was a full set that gave a concise overview to the storylines. It led me to thinking about how that could work in sport and in particular football, so I designed a first postcard after the Stoke City match. I didn't really think ahead, so when people asked what would be next I had no idea, but I felt it was a project worth exploring. Also I used to collect football stickers as a kid, so the idea of creating something collectable really appealed to me."

Dave, 30, gets his ideas during the game itself. "I keep an eye out for a brilliant moment worth celebrating. If that doesn't happen, I try to put together a design relevant to the match itself, the opposition or any special landmarks that were passed during the game –such as Steven Gerrard's 100th goal. If I'm really struggling then I chat with my wife and steal some of her suggestions!"

Could he do something similar for other clubs? "I've had requests, including one from my Evertonian brother Mark. But supporting Liverpool all my life has given me a huge knowledge bank for ideas and I don't think it would be possible to do it for another club without hours and hours of research. Plus I'd have to watch Everton games!

"After the first postcard I had no idea if it would take off, but the feedback so far has been brilliant. I've been fortunate enough to sell postcards to supporters as far afield as Australia, the USA, Chile, India, Thailand, Sweden, Norway and Iceland."

The postcards can now be purchased as gifts, with half delivered in time for Christmas and the remainder sent weekly until the end of the season. All the details are at **www.davewill.bigcartel.com.**

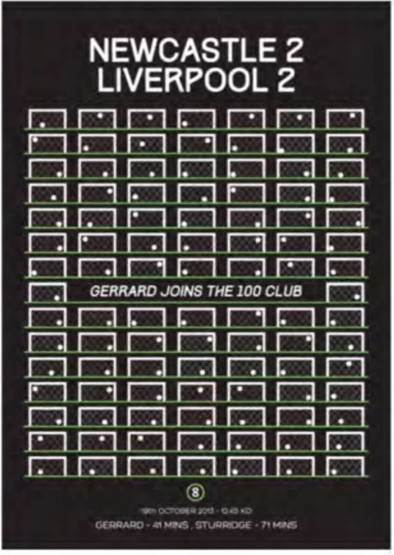

LIVERPOOL - MAN UTD
1 0
3
DANIEL STURRIDGE - 4 MINS


SWANSEA 2
LIVERPOOL 2
MOSES PARTS THE SWANSEA
12

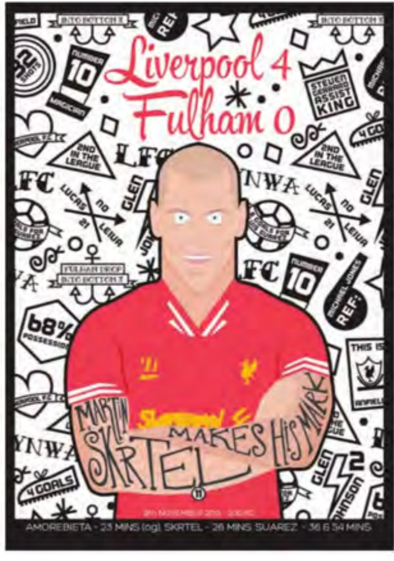

Liverpool 0
Southampton 1
HE'S OUR KEEPER
OUR BELGIAN KEEPER
HE'S SIMON MIGNOLET
5
21st SEPTEMBER 2013 - 3.00 KO
Simon's saves still not enough.


SUNDERLAND 1
LIVERPOOL 3
SUAREZ
7
6
29th SEPTEMBER 2013 - 4.00 KO
STURRIDGE - 28 MINS, SUAREZ - 36 & 89 MINS


LIVERPOOL 3
CRYSTAL PALACE 1
gerrard scores for the 15th season in a row
7


NEWCASTLE 2
LIVERPOOL 2
GERRARD JOINS THE 100 CLUB
8
GERRARD - 41 MINS , STURRIDGE - 71 MINS


liverpool 4
west brom 1
★ king luis steals the show with a magical hat-trick ★
SUAREZ - 12, 17, 55 MINS, STURRIDGE - 77 MINS


Liverpool 4
Fulham 0
STEVEN GERRARD ASSIST KING
2ND IN THE LEAGUE
YNWA
4 GOALS
68% POSSESSION
MARTIN SKRTEL MAKES HIS MARK
11
AMOREBIETA - 23 MINS (og), SKRTEL - 26 MINS, SUAREZ - 36 & 54 MINS

EVERTON 3
LIVERPOOL 3

Fab Four play Their part in epic Merseyside Derby

Simon Mignolet | Philippe Coutinho

Daniel Sturridge | Luis Suarez



23rd NOVEMBER 2013 - 12.45 KO

COUTINHO - 5 MINS, SUAREZ - 19 MINS, STURRIDGE - 89 MINS

TOP OF THE KOPS part 3

Continuing our series in which Reds fans from top local bands pick their favourite Liverpool players for every occasion...



Fran Doyle from Small Print

Good night out

John Barnes. We'd end up at a karaoke bar. He's got a good voice, Barnesy. *World in Motion* and the *Anfield Rap* proved that.

Best dressed

I don't mind the stuff that Jamie Carragher wears. He's not trying to be someone he's not – just a Liverpool lad wearing gear that he feels comfortable in.

Front man

Peter Crouch. Because of his height he's got stage presence. His dancing would also help. I'm not sure about his voice but he seems to have a lot of confidence and that helps.

The muscle

Three spring to mind. You could imagine Sami Hyypia with some dark shades and an ear-piece organising everyone. He's got an intimidating voice too. You also need someone in security who stands out and looks a bit of a mad man so I'll go for Abel Xavier. Igor Biscan can back them up.

John Barnes in the World in Motion video



Roadie

There's nobody else but Dirk Kuyt is there? He's a selfless worker, keeping everybody on their toes. I'd imagine that he'd always get the job done. He always comes good.

Five-a-side

Meatloaf in goal. He's a big fella and obviously he'd fill the goal and the penalty area. That's what you

> **"Sami Hyypia could be on the door with dark shades!"**

need in five-a-side from a goalie. I'd also have Michael Jackson for his step-overs. Then I'd pick Serge from Kasabian because he's meant to be a good footballer. John Lennon would be in there purely because I'd like to go for a drink with him afterwards. Then Beyonce (right) because she'd distract the opposition.

No1 album or League title?

Liverpool win the league, definitely. Trade it off for a no2 single.





WISH LIST

Christmas is coming and there's simply no excuse for not supporting the Mighty Reds in style – and these are just a few must-haves from the **Official LFC Collection**. The new range in its entirety can be viewed and purchased online at **www.liverpoolfc.com/store** and any Official LFC Club Store.



2



1



3



4

1 Gerrard Box Set £295
Exclusive to Liverpool FC Retail and finished to a very high standard, this is the first of the club's collectors series to feature the hand-signed signature of the captain. Featuring a 2013/14 home shirt with Gerrard 8 personalisation, the number 8 has been signed by Steven Gerrard himself. We expect demand to be extremely high. (A2862)

2 LFC Design Box Tie Cufflink Set £20
Add a sophisticated touch with these immaculate cufflinks with matching patterned tie. (A1934)

3 LFC Men's Harrington Jacket £50
The classic men's jacket receives a cool Liverpool FC makeover – featuring a Liverbird on the back right shoulder. (A2411)

4 LFC Nylon Laptop Bag £30
This sleek laptop bag with subtle LFC crest in the bottom corner will keep you organised at the match and around town. (A2066)

5 LFC Fashion Fairaisle Knit Hat £20
Don't let the winter weather dictate your sartorial selection – this black-and-grey knitted bobble hat will keep you warm and dapper too on Liverpool FC matchdays. (A1965)

6 LFC Official Cross Pen/Pencil Set £60
The height of stationery sophistication. (A2185)

7 Fashion Fairaisle Glove Navy £12
These snug and stylish navy-patterned gloves are designed to go with everything in your winter matchday repertoire. (A1942)

All featured products are available in official club stores and online at **www.liverpoolfc.com/store**

5





6



7

WIN OFFICIAL LFC LOCKER



Here's a fun and fresh new way to show your support for Liverpool FC. Emblazoned with the LFC crest on the front and the side, MyFunky lockers are a great storage solution for any bedroom, garage or clubhouse – the perfect place to keep all your valuable football stuff. They are available in two sizes, tall (£189.99) and cube (£89.99), both lockable with the option for additional shelving – and you can order them now at www.myfunkyshop.com/branded-lockers.



For your chance to win a tall MyFunky LFC locker simply answer the following question:

What does the sign say above the players tunnel at Anfield?

(a) You'll Never Walk Alone
(b) This Is Anfield
(c) Come On You Mighty Reds

The closing date for entries is Friday 10 January 2014. Email your answer – including your name and address please – to LFCmag@programmemaster.com. Please put LOCKER COMPO in the subject bar. We'll announce the winners early in February.

THE BIG READ

Rounding up all the latest official Liverpool FC books that will make ideal Christmas gifts

Here's LFC legend Ian Rush at the club's Liverpool One store helping to launch the latest must-have book, *The Official Treasures of Liverpool FC.*

This fully illustrated and revised edition is packed with over 20 exciting and rare items of removable facsimile memorabilia – including programmes, tickets, player contracts, letters, postcards, telegrams and photographs – from 1892 to the modern day.

Published by Carlton books, hardback and priced £30, it's been put together by LFC Museum curator Stephen Done and the former sportswriter for the *Liverpool Echo* and founder of *The Kop* magazine, David Walmsley. Fans can buy their copy from one of the Liverpool FC Club stores or the official online store at www.liverpoolfc.com/shop.

"As a fan myself it's been great to bring this together," says Done. "What is also great about book is the 20 removable pieces of memorabilia, which are identical copies of some of our most rare club artefacts."



Rushie's Christmas read is sorted



Official Liverpool FC Book of Records £16.99

All of the player and club records plus profiles of ten Anfield legends who helped shape LFC. The perfect volume from which to understand just why Liverpool FC is a sporting behemoth.



Official Liverpool FC Ultimate Junior Reds' Book £9.99

In this book you'll discover facts and trivia, player profiles and more. It's the perfect companion guide to LFC for any Junior Red, and is guaranteed to keep young fans entertained season after season.



Official Liverpool FC Sticker Colouring Book £4.99

Colour in portraits of your Anfield heroes, design your own Liverpool kit, decorate the club crest or draw yourself among the crowd in the Kop! With 150 stickers, this book will keep junior Reds entertained for hours.



Official Liverpool FC Sticker Activity Book £4.99

Crammed with puzzles to solve and simple activities to complete – including a nail-biting penalty shoot-out. Plus there are 150 colourful stickers for fans to complete the activities, decorate the pages, or stick wherever they like!

OTHER TOP LFC TITLES

The Liverpool Encyclopaedia by Arnie Baldursson and Gudmundur Magnusson £37.50

Red Machine: Liverpool FC in the 1980s by Simon Hughes £15.99

The Anatomy of Liverpool by Jonathan Wilson £18.99



#theKOP

Have you visited #theKOP yet?

LFC's brand new official social media hub is now live.

#theKOP is your one-stop shop for all LFC-related social media needs and gives you the chance to share your thoughts on the official website.

So, whether it's Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram or Pinterest, you'll find all the latest talking points on #theKOP.






Let your voice be heard...



liverpoolfc.com/thekop


Standard
Chartered
LFC
Standard
Chartered
LFC
12
L.F.C.
L.F.C.

Sturridge on Instagram




4 November
Blessed to be in a position to do what I do for a grassroots football club... #educationandfootball



27 October
@itspsd good vibes at the NFL. Hope to see you again soon #playthegame



26 October
#myteam #lfc #redordead great win!! Feeling blessed, thanks goes to God #ds15



5 October
That kid used to be me asking for a shirt. Crazy how times change. #redordead all day every day



1 October
Good to buck up on my old friend @fmuamba at Melwood today #blessed #inspiration



22 September
Trying to put this into action...



20 September
One day I hope I can say to my grandchildren that I achieved what I aspired to do in my life

Every test in our life makes us bitter or better, every problem comes to break us or make us. The choice is ours whether we become VICTIM or VICTOR.

14 September
Real talk...



10 September
Praying one day I can look back one day and be proud of what I accomplished



29 August
The matrix style Sturridge... #ynwa #redordead



26 August
Love my fans... S/O to whoever drew this...



25 August
With la familia Good vibes #myteam #mifamilia #Godisgood #blessed



Your favourite Steven Gerrard goal ever...

STE HOARE
@stehoare
His derby hat-trick proved how good he is still

TOM CORCORAN
@tc1583
has to be Olympiakos surely

AIDEN CUSICK
@Aidz90
the dribble vs Sheff Wed bamboozled Des Walker

ANDY MILBURN
@AndrewGMilburn
No contest – the leveller in the '06 SG Cup final. Quality.

SOREN BANKE LARSEN
@sbl7410
his goal vs boro some years back. Quality strike!

JOSEPH SHEERIN
@_josephsheerin
Goodison, 2001, piledriver, tongue out, mayhem

EARL HAUPT
@EarlHaupt
'That' goal against Olympiakos.... Nuff said

JFT96
@Mr_ChrisL
Stevie's first of his Everton hat-trick when he curled it in

JONATHAN GILLET
@Non1966
December 8th 2004

BIG GIRL
@JakeLeeYes
Hat-trick v Everton. My first game at Anfield

HAWKSLFC
@hawkslfc
last minute equaliser against West Ham in the FA Cup final

ERIK S
@Erik Sørli
You beauty! vs #olympiakos


L.F.C.
GERRARD


LIVERPOOL
F.C